THE BIBLE OF BOXING

The RING

ALSO INSIDE

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QUARRY'S 'HARD LUCK'

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MARQUEZ GETS ONE MORE SHOT AT HIS NEMESIS,

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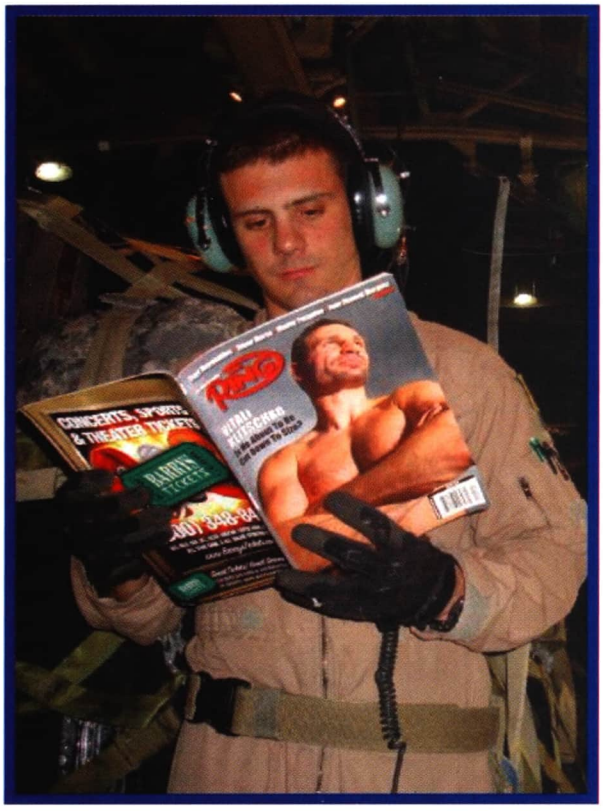

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RINGSIDE

BY MICHAEL ROSENTHAL

NEW NAMES, SAME MISSION

The names change but the mission of THE RING Magazine remains the same, to provide the best boxing coverage in the business.

That was the case in 1922, when Hall of Famer Nat Fleischer and Dan Daniel founded "The Bible of Boxing." And that's the case in 2011, as new editors take the reins of the venerable publication.

You might be familiar with me and Doug Fischer. We've worked hard the past three years to build the magazine's Web site – RingTV.com – into a must-visit destination for all boxing fans. And, as you've seen, Lem Satterfield has been a dynamic addition to the staff.

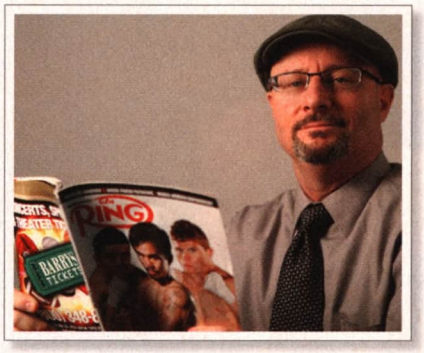
That's the kind of passion and commitment we now bring to the pages of *THE RING*, whose lofty journalistic standards we are dedicated to upholding.

I bring to the job more years of experience as a professional journalist (mostly in newspapers) than I sometimes like to admit, about 25. And I've been covering boxing for more than 20 years. I love the sport; it's part of who I am.

Doug is a pioneer in boxing coverage on the internet, having founded first House of Boxing and then Maxboxing with partners. His knowledge, passion and honest approach to boxing journalism are inspiring.

Some of the writers whose work you've seen in the magazine will continue to contribute, including Dr. Margaret Goodman, Michael Rivest, Joe Santoliquito and Don Stradley. We also plan to branch out, to seek a wider variety of writers who will provide a broader and richer perspective on what makes the sport so unique.

You will notice in this issue that celebrated writers such Ron Borges, Norm Frauenheim, Tom Hauser, Gary Andrew Poole and Steve Springer have made contributions. These heavyweights of boxing journalism will be regular contributors.



We plan to add new features to the magazine. For example, this month we are introducing "Roll with the Punches," a section dedicated to the lighter side of boxing in relatively small, easily digestible bites.

And more new features lay ahead as we try to produce the most informative and most entertaining product possible.

You also will notice our striking new design, which we believe makes the magazine easier and more enjoyable to read. It's all part of an effort to take a great product and continually make it better.

I will conclude by saying I'm thrilled to be in this position, following in the proud tradition of my predecessor, Nigel Collins, and those who came before him.

The Ring is precious to those devoted to the sport. You can be assured that we will treat it as such.

Michael Rosenthal
Editor

A LETTER FROM JOE SANTOLIQUITO

Dear readers,

I am proud to say that during the 14 years I've been with *THE RING*, Nigel Collins and I have strived to maintain the highest journalistic standards to bring you accurate, compelling and objective coverage of boxing. That includes the past five years, during which the publication has been owned by Golden Boy Promotions. Any speculation that "The Bible of Boxing" would cease to fulfill its mission as an independent voice proved to be unfounded.

And I believe strongly that the same editorial integrity will remain intact under the leadership of Editor Michael Rosenthal and Executive Editor Doug Fischer, veteran boxing writers and editors with impeccable reputations and a combined 40 years experience. I'm also confident they will maintain the high journalistic standards that have been a trademark of the magazine for close to 90 years, including its internationally-respected Ring Ratings. This is why I will proudly continue my association with *THE RING* as a contributor to the magazine and its Web site, RingTV.com. I wouldn't risk my reputation, nor would Michael and Doug risk theirs, if the situation were otherwise.

Change is constant in the ever-swirling sea of sports media today. What will never change is *THE RING*'s commitment to quality, entertaining journalism, something the magazine owes to its loyal readers around the world.

Joseph Santoliquito

The Ring

VOLUME 90, NO. 12
DECEMBER 2011

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MICHAEL ROSENTHAL

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
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BRIAN HARTY

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PALM COAST, FL 32164-3122
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COMEOUTWRITING@SEPUBLICATIONS.COM
OR P.O. BOX 251753,
LOS ANGELES CA, 90025

The Ring (ISSN: 0035-5410), Vol. 90, NO. 11 (December 2011), is published monthly by Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC, 510 Township Line Rd., Suite 130, Blue bell, PA 19422. Periodicals postage paid at Blue Bell, PA 19422 and additional post offices. Postmasters: Send change of address notices to: The Ring, P.O. Box 433122, Palm Coast, FL 32164-3122. Single copy price $8.95 in U.S. and Canada (£4.95 in the UK). Subscription price $107.40 in the U.S., $140.40 in Canada and Mexico, $197.40 in remaining countries. Not responsible for the loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage.

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The RING

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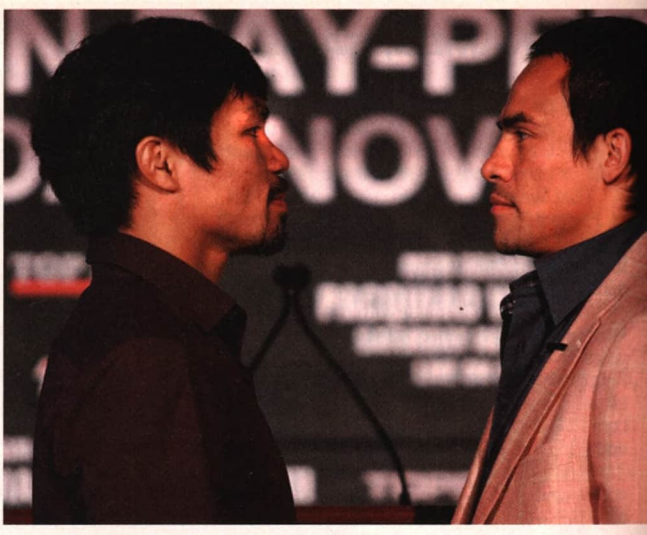

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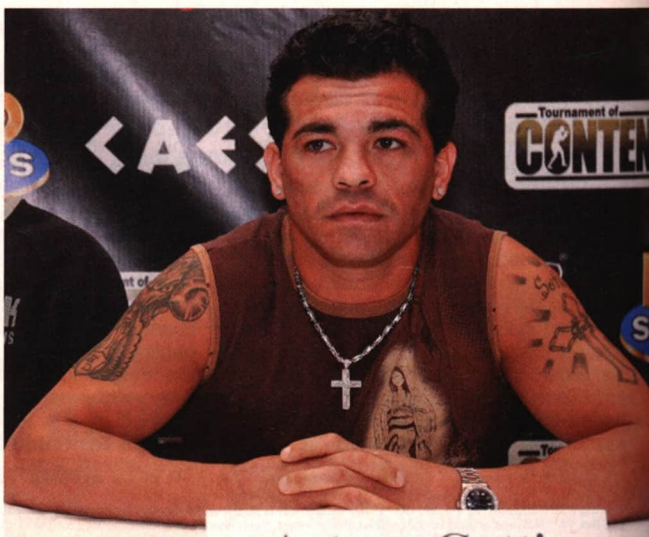

Arturo Gatti

IMAGES: NAOKI FUKUDA

Yuriorkis Gamboa wasn't at his spectacular best but got the job done against Daniel Ponce de Leon on Sept. 10.

IMAGES: CHRIS FARINA / TOP RANK

An estimated 30,000 showed up to see Manny Pacquiao and Juan Manuel Marquez at a public news conference Sept. 8 in Mexico City.

MAYWEATHER DID NOTHING WRONG

"Protect yourself at all times" is the last thing Joe Cortez said after the ring introductions. Floyd Mayweather Jr. did nothing wrong. Victor Ortiz brought the street to Mayweather, butting him more than once in the fourth round because of his frustration over the better fighter's dominance. So Mayweather brought the street to Ortiz, distracting him and knocking him out. The difference was that Mayweather's actions were legal. It demonstrated his ring generalship and awareness; he knew exactly what to do and when to do it, which is the mark of a brilliant fighter. Mayweather actually did Ortiz a favor, sparing him from several more rounds of the unfolding beating.

Brad Morris
sweetbrad38@yahoo.com

WASTED OPPORTUNITY

Floyd Mayweather Jr. could've had a highlight-reel knockout, which is what the fans deserved to see. Instead, he got his knockout against a man who clearly didn't realize that the fight was back on (even if he should have) and who was had his hands by his sides, looking at the referee. You don't need to be a great fighter to get a knockout in those circumstances; anyone could have done it. The fans deserved better. Mayweather also missed a great chance to enhance his legacy. Instead of debating the way the fight ended, we could have been celebrating a great performance by a true master boxer. The fact we aren't is Mayweather's fault.

Dave Rado
Colchester, UK

CORTEZ FAILED

Joe Cortez: firm but fair? The referee was neither in the Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Victor Ortiz fight. When things turned into a circus, he had an obligation to take control. He failed. He stood by and looked confused during the sucker punch. He ought to be suspended for his performance. Refs don't get paid – or shouldn't be – to get swept up in or bowled over by the emotion of the moment. No Arthur Mercante is he.

Jack O'Connor
Wellesley, Mass.

WLAD BEATS 'EM ALL

It's funny to read "experts" name the past heavyweights who would have KO'd Wladimir Klitschko in William Dettloff's story "How Good is Wladimir" (October 2011 issue). After reading the article, I was left wondering who COULDN'T beat the current champion. In fact throw some more names in. How about Tony Galento, Tony Tubbs and Renaldo Snipes? Hell, I think I can beat him. My response to all the predictions: Bull----! Klitschko can beat everyone named. He is smart and hits harder than you think. Ask Eddie Chambers. Here is something to think about: If it were Sam Peters who went to jail instead of Ike Ibeabuchi, people would say that Peters would crush Klitschko for the same reasons. Too strong. Hits too hard. Well, you see what happened to Peters last time. And if Wlad CAN'T beat them, you still have his bigger brother ready to clean up.

Mike Rafferty
Philadelphia, PA

LETTER OF THE MONTH

ANOTHER BLACK EYE

The deep unsportsmanlike and unprincipled conduct of Floyd Mayweather Jr. – knowingly hitting an opponent who had his hands down and was not looking at him but at the referee for instruction – is yet another black eye on the sport of boxing, another reason why mainstream America and the major television networks may, very understandably, wish to continue to keep professional boxing at a distance. Readers of *THE RING Magazine* will remember that Mayweather did the same exact thing to Arturo Gatti (hitting after the break while his opponent was unguarded and looking at the referee), knocking Gatti down but not out in that instance. In the Ortiz fight, however, Joe Cortez also deserves our blame: He never properly brought the fighters back together, it did not sound like he called "time in" despite his claim to the contrary and he was not even looking at the action when Mayweather attacked a defenseless opponent. Cortez should have disqualified Mayweather or given Ortiz five minutes to recover. It is a slap in the face of every boxing fan (especially those who paid $59.95 to watch this sports travesty) that he did not. Regardless of who we blame, however, one thing is clear: The sport of boxing will be better off when Floyd Mayweather Jr. is no longer a part of it.

Richard A. Leo, Ph.D., J.D.
Associate Professor of Law
University of San Francisco

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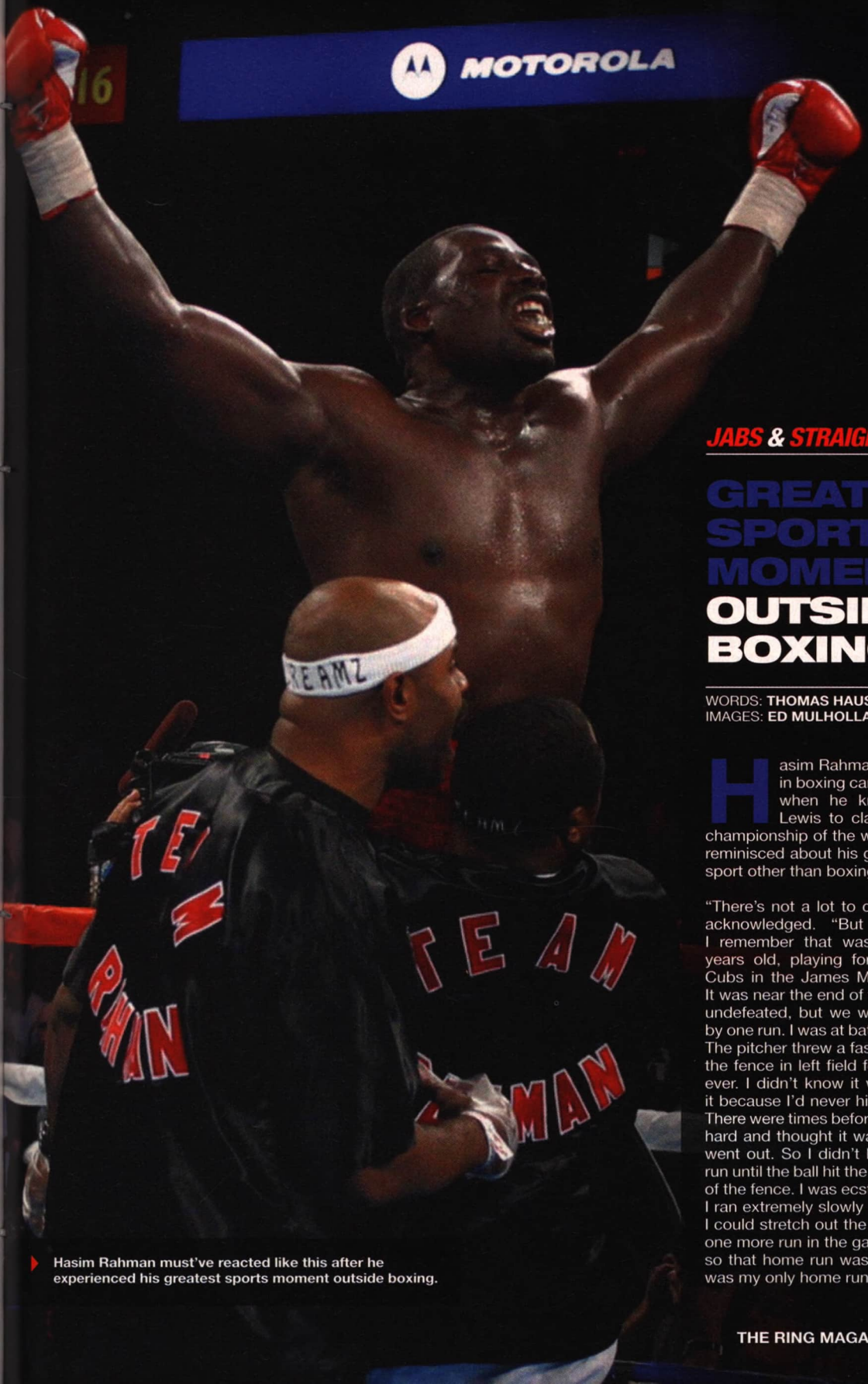


Hasim Rahman must've reacted like this after he experienced his greatest sports moment outside boxing.

JABS & STRAIGHT WRITES

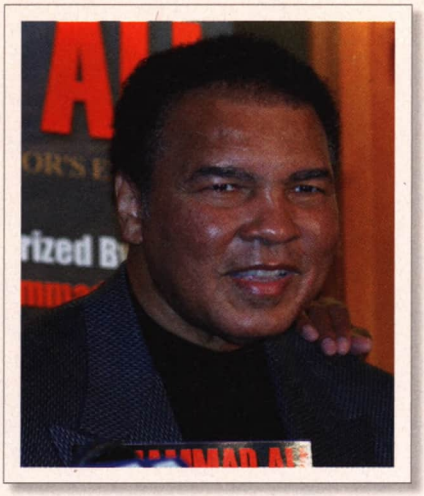
GREATEST SPORTS MOMENTS ... OUTSIDE BOXING

WORDS: **THOMAS HAUSER**
IMAGES: **ED MULHOLLAND / FIGHTWIREIMAGES**

Hasim Rahman's greatest moment in boxing came on April 22, 2001, when he knocked out Lennox Lewis to claim the heavyweight championship of the world. Recently, Rock reminisced about his greatest moment in a sport other than boxing.

"There's not a lot to choose from," Hasim acknowledged. "But there's one thing I remember that was special. I was 12 years old, playing for a team called the Cubs in the James Mosher Little League. It was near the end of the season. We were undefeated, but we were losing the game by one run. I was at bat with a man on base. The pitcher threw a fastball, and I hit it over the fence in left field for my first home run ever. I didn't know it was gone when I hit it because I'd never hit a home run before. There were times before when I'd hit the ball hard and thought it was gone, but it never went out. So I didn't know it was a home run until the ball hit the dirt on the other side of the fence. I was ecstatic. I was so happy. I ran extremely slowly around the bases so I could stretch out the moment. We scored one more run in the game and won by two, so that home run was the difference. That was my only home run ever." ■

IMAGES: **ED MULHOLLAND / FIGHTWIREIMAGES**



THE GREATEST

In the mid-1990s, I was in Seattle with Muhammad Ali to attend a celebration honoring him as "The Fighter of the Century." The festivities included a night of boxing at The Kingdome.

Meeting Ali, the undercard fighters were in awe. One of them, a lightweight with a losing record in a handful of professional bouts, told The Greatest, "Mr. Ali, I just want you to know; when I'm going to the ring for a fight, I get real nervous; so I say to myself, 'I'm Muhammad Ali; I'm the greatest fighter of all time, and no one can beat me.'"

Ali leaned toward the fighter and whispered, "When I was boxing and got nervous before a fight, I said the same thing."

THREE THINGS YOU WILL NEVER READ ON A BOXING WEBSITE

1. Dan Goossen is on *Dancing with the Stars* tonight.

2. "The WBC has decided that it will no longer collect sanctioning fees," Jose Sulaiman told the convention delegates. "For the good of boxing, we will let the fighters keep that money."

3. It was another well-scored fight in New Jersey.

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM THE 1960s NEW YORK BOXING SCENE

Cus D'Amato: "Lots of managers grab the nickels and dimes. They put their fighter in a tough fight because a dime is more than a nickel and they want the dime. My job is to maneuver the fighter to a dollar. Once he's ready to win a title, all the money the manager wants will be there."

Harry Markson: "When a fighter starts out as an amateur, he wants to win medals and cups and plaques. When he turns pro, he wants to win in Madison Square Garden. When he wins in the Garden, he wants to win a championship. When he wins a championship, he wants to make a lot of money. And when he makes a lot of money, he wants to win medals and cups and plaques."

Teddy Brenner: "Ask any great fighter who his toughest opponent was and, nine times out of ten, he'll name someone he beat."

Floyd Patterson: "The best thing about being a fighter is that, outside the ring, you don't have to fight."

PROMOTER (SIGH)

Now that promoter Gary Shaw and Alfredo Angulo have parted ways, it's worth revisiting comments that Shaw made following his fighter's first-round knockout of Joachim Alcine on July 17, 2010.

Shaw: I'll fight anybody with Angulo from 154 pounds to heavyweight.
What about Sergio Martinez?
Shaw: I have a 154-pounder. So if Sergio Martinez wants to fight at 154 …

It would be at 155 pounds for the middleweight title.

Shaw: I represent a junior middleweight. When we're ready to move up, I'll make that decision. Nobody makes me move up. Will Angulo fight him? Yes, at 154 pounds.

I thought you just said you'd fight him from 154 to heavyweight.

Shaw: I don't believe in catch weights. I believe in real weights. Catch weight is bullshit. It's just made-up stuff.

Less than a month later, Chad Dawson (another Shaw fighter) was readying to defend his WBC light heavyweight belt against Jean Pascal. At the final pre-fight press conference on Aug. 11, Shaw declared, "After Chad Dawson beats Pascal, I'd like to see him fight Lucian Bute. They could do it at a catch weight of 172 pounds."

QUICK QUIZ

1. Roy Jones, Jr. once fought an entire round without his opponent landing a punch – the first time since the introduction of "punch-stats" that a "shutout" was registered. Who was the opponent?

2. Lennox Lewis defeated 13 men who held the WBC, WBA, IBF or WBO heavyweight championship during their ring career. Name them.

3. What amateur boxing title did Teddy Atlas win?

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Vinnie Pazienza, on June 24, 1995. Jones knocked him out in the sixth round.

2. Lennox Lewis beat (in order) Mike Weaver, Tony Tucker, Frank Bruno, Tommy Morrison, Ray Mercer, Oliver McCall, Henry Akinwande, Shannon Briggs, Evander Holyfield, Frans Botha, Hasim Rahman, Mike Tyson and Vitali Klitschko.

3. In 1976, fighting out of Catskill, Atlas was the 139-pound Golden Gloves champion in the Adirondack Region in upstate New York.

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at **thauser@rcn.com.** His most recent book (*Winks and Daggers: An Inside Look at Another Year in Boxing*) has just been published by the University of Arkansas Press.

Thomas Hearns said that Sugar Ray Leonard was the best all-around fighter he ever faced.

BEST I'VE FACED

WORDS: **LEM SATTERFIELD** IMAGE: **DIRCK HALSTEAD / GETTY IMAGES**

Younger boxing fans who never had the chance to see Thomas Hearns fight live missed something special. Hearns, a Hall of Famer, was a gifted athlete and superb boxer who won six major titles in five weight divisions in his two-decade career. That wasn't what he was known for, though. When you mention Hearns to oldtimers the first thing that comes to mind is "power."

Hearns (61-5-1, 48 knockouts) could end a fight in a breathtaking fraction of a second, which made him one of the most crowd-pleasing fighters who ever stepped into the ring.

The likes of Roberto Duran (TKO 2), Pipino Cuevas (TKO 2) and Juan Domingo Roldan (KO 4) – all knockout victims – will attest to Hearns' brain-rattling power.

Hearns didn't win all his biggest fights, falling to Sugar Ray Leonard and Marvin Hagler in his highest-profile fights. Some say his chin was suspect, although he was stopped only four times in 67 fights.

One thing cannot be disputed, though: If you ever saw Hearns fight, you never forgot it.

The Ring recently caught up to Hearns, now 52, and asked him to take part in our "Best I've Faced" series. Here's how he responded when we laid out our 10 categories:

BEST OVERALL FIGHTER: SUGAR RAY LEONARD

The one that stands out the most is Ray Leonard. Ray Leonard made me be a smarter and a better fighter. I had to think the entire time. Without a guy like Ray Leonard, boxing would not be the same. He makes you think. He makes your ability come out. He's a thinker and a sharp, accurate puncher. He could punch you from different angles and he was effective all of the time -- whether it was with the jab, the left hook or the right hand. He could do damage. Leonard could do it all.

BEST BOXER: LEONARD

I just told you who the best boxer I've ever faced was. Ray Leonard was the best boxer that I've ever faced and the best thinker that I've ever fought in the ring. Pound for pound, Leonard is the best fighter that I've ever faced and definitely the best boxer.

BEST PUNCHER: JUAN DOMINGO ROLDAN

The hardest puncher that I've ever faced was a guy named Juan Domingo Roldan. He came with some punches and they really hurt. I had him hurt and he still hit me with a shot that rocked my world. The shot was an overhand right. It not only shocked me, but it made me dizzy for a minute.

BEST DEFENSE: WILFRED BENITEZ

The best defensive fighter I've ever fought was definitely Wilfred Benitez. Benitez had the best defense and the best head movement that a man can have. There were times where I had him cornered and I knew that I had him. But with his head movement and his upper-body movement, he would just slip right away from you. I kept missing the knockout. I thought I could have knocked him out, but I just kept on missing him. But when I did hit him, he also had a good chin, too. So he made it very, very difficult for me.

FASTEST HANDS: LEONARD

Again, I've got to go back to Ray Leonard. At the time, he had the fastest hands in boxing. It's all about his timing. I know that I have good timing, and I have very good speed, but my speed is different from his speed because he would use head movement to set up his fast shots. His speed was his power.

FASTEST FEET: NO ONE

I don't concern myself with a guy's feet. I wasn't watching their feet.

BEST CHIN: IRAN BARKLEY

Iran had a great chin, man. He had some boxing ability. Why wouldn't he go down? I would hit him with everything in the world, you know, and he would just stand there.

BEST JAB: LEONARD

He just had a straight jab. It was just a quick, fast, up-jab. He could touch you and make off-set and make you think about throwing a punch.

STRONGEST: MARVIN HAGLER

Marvin Hagler was a very strong guy. I hit him and he just kept on coming. Ain't no way in the world that he could be taking all of the punches that I was throwing and he's not strong. Marvin Hagler had something. For three rounds, I hit him, and he never fell down. He might wobble but he would just come right back.

SMARTEST: LEONARD

I got to go back to my man – Raaaay Leonard. He thinks before he does anything. He knows every punch that he's going to throw and every move that he's going to make. He just thinks before he does everything. ■

HALL OF FAME: SHOULD AND COULD

WORDS: **CLIFF ROLD**

It takes five years to get from retirement to official enshrinement at the International Boxing Hall of Fame. But fight followers can assume ahead of time that certain active fighters will land in Canastota, N.Y., the home of the Hall.

For names like Wladimir Klitschko, Bernard Hopkins, Floyd Mayweather and Manny Pacquiao, "future Hall of Famer" isn't a question. It is an adjective. They're in.

Beyond them are some men who are expected to earn their nods someday and others who could?

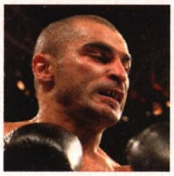
Here's a look at some of them:

SHOULD

Vitali Klitschko: If he'd stayed retired, it's a no on merit. That's where a 72 (rounds)-0 run since returning in 2008 from an almost four-year layoff and a career-best victory over Tomasz Adamek at age 40 come in.

Antonio Tarver: Suddenly resurgent at cruiserweight in 2011, Tarver has never been given enough credit for cleaning out the light heavyweight division in the early 2000s and ending the prime of Roy Jones Jr.

Miguel Cotto: One of the few legitimate U.S. draws of the 2000s, Cotto has won belts in three classes and left behind a string of classics. It took beasts to beat him, and history won't forget him.



Vic Darchinyan: A terror at flyweight, and the first man to unify three belts at junior bantamweight, Darchinyan is still adding quality wins at bantamweight and has lost only to his fellow elite. Sure, he's crude, but he's also a testament to substance over style.

Pongsaklek Wonjongkam: A two-time lineal world flyweight champion, Wonjongkam broke the consecutive title-defense streak of Miguel Canto during his first reign and upset an undefeated Koki Kameda to regain his throne. He might not get in on the first try (few of Asia's best do), but he will get in eventually.

COULD

Chris John (shown here against Rocky Juarez) could use a unification victory or two boost his Hall chances. The dominant force at featherweight for years, John hasn't traveled much and his best victory, a decision over Juan Manuel Marquez, smelled a little of home cooking. A big unification victory or two before he retires could make his numbers (14 WBA defenses so far) matter.

Carl Froch: From a 2008 victory over Jean Pascal to his pending battle with Andre Ward on Dec. 17, Froch has had the toughest schedule in the sport and gone an impressive 5-1. If he made it 6-1 by beating Ward to win the Super Six World Boxing Classic championship, he will have probably clinched induction.

Glen Johnson: If the veteran "Road Warrior" upsets unbeaten Lucian Bute on Nov. 5, it could seal the deal. Even if he doesn't, Johnson's old school, fought-'em-all approach might make him a sentimental pick, if more than five years after his retirement.

Sergio Martinez: The current middleweight king has had a solid run since busting from the pack but lacks marquee opponents and, already 36, might run out of the time needed to ensure his place.

Jorge Arce: A former lineal champion at 108 pounds with non-interim belts in two other divisions (one of them, currently, at 122 pounds), Arce has lost to most of the better fighters he's seen but he has star power and staying power, and that counts.

Cliff Rold is a member of the Ring Magazine Ratings Advisory Panel, the Yahoo Pound-for-Pound voting panel and the Boxing Writers Association of America. He can be reached at roldboxing@hotmail.com

IMAGES: NAOKI FUKUDA / CHRIS COZZONE / EMILY HARNEY / JAVIEL CENTENO / ED MULHOLLAND / DIRCK HALSTEAD/ LIAISON / SCOTT MALLON

FAMOUS FANS

CELEBRITIES WHO ARE DEVOTED TO THE SWEET SCIENCE. THIS MONTH: CHRIS SHIFLETT, LEAD GUITARIST FOR FOO FIGHTERS

Chris Shiflett is the gifted lead guitarist for Foo Fighters, one of the hottest rock bands on the planet. He's also a committed boxing fanatic.

And it doesn't end there. Shiflett, 40, actually learned to box himself when he was in his 20s and had a handful of amateur fights when he was in 30s, giving him a keen perspective on the sport.

Shiflett knows his stuff. He appreciates a good boxer but prefers a brawler, the type of fighter who connects with the fans. He revels in great fights, particularly when he's watching in some bar with passionate fans halfway around the world. And he suffers when the sport struggles.

In other words, it's a significant part of his busy life. Thus, he was gracious enough to get on the phone with THE RING and give his thoughts on a number subjects related to boxing.

Shiflett lives with his wife and three sons in Pacific Palisades, in the Los Angeles area, when he's not somewhere else in the world entertaining his own fans.

How did you become a boxing fan?
When I was a kid, my brother Mike was a massive boxing fan. It was always on TV. And I hated it. I used to give him so much s--- about it. I would say the fighters were cave men, it was violent, stupid, all that. I never paid much attention until I was in my mid-20s. Then it just clicked. I missed out on an incredible golden age (of boxing) even though it was on my TV my whole childhood. Now I spend a lot of time traveling so I have time to go back and watch all the fights I missed (on YouTube). Ray Leonard. Thomas Hearns. Julio Cesar Chavez. I'm trying to catch up.

What's your earliest boxing memory?
One of the earliest memories I have is my brother boxing at the Boys Club. He took me when I was 6, 7 years old. I remember he put gloves on me and some other kid and had us go at it. Maybe this is why boxing didn't click for me: I got punched in the nose. I remember being very scared. That's the only time I boxed as a little kid. Then, as an adult, I took boxing classes when I was in my 20s. I started in a class. Then I trained one on one with somebody. Then I tried sparring and got into it. I did the white-collar boxing thing. It was fun. Then I actually did some amateur fights, which was really fun. By that time I was in my early 30s, though. I just basically got the s--- kicked out of me by some young guys. I missed my prime. I think I had three fights.

Tell me about your first fight.
I was thinking I was in great shape for my first fight. It was at the L.A. Boxing Club, downtown. There were a million people there. You don't know who you're going to fight until they match you with someone who is within a few pounds of you. My trainer comes in and says, "We found the perfect guy. He only has one hand." He was missing his fingers on his right hand. We're laughing. So I'm fighting a one-handed man. Then I see him warming up and I think, "Hey, he's pretty good." So I get in there and for a half a round I was amazing, jabbing, moving around. Then he opened up on me. From that point on, I got my ass kicked by a guy with one hand. It was a pretty humbling experience."

Was boxing a good experience?
It was so much fun. The great thing about boxing is that it's so different from any other sport. If you play golf, you can't just train next to Tiger Woods. If you like football, you can't scrimmage with the Raiders. If you're into boxing and you live in a big city, though, (boxing is) a small community. Eventually you end up in a gym with elite fighters. I was living in New York when Felix Trinidad came into the gym to workout. In L.A., when I moved out here and trained at Joe Goossen's gym, the same kind of thing happened. It's amazing. As f----- up as boxing is, it's a tight community.

IMAGE: TONY WOOLISCROFT

"I GOT MY ASS KICKED BY A GUY WITH ONE HAND. IT WAS A PRETTY HUMBLING EXPERIENCE."

How often to get to watch fights?
All the time. Right now the band is in a touring cycle. I'm gone a lot. The traveling man's best friend is Slingbox. I watch the fights no matter where I am, all over Europe, wherever. I actually watch live fights on my computer. I had to find a bar or someplace to watch fights before Slingbox. I was on tour, in Manchester (England). Joe Calzaghe was fighting (Mikkel) Kessler. I had to find a bar late at night. That's one of the fun things about watching fights on tour, searching out a place that's showing it. I ended up in a bar in Manchester with a bunch of Welsh people. Calzaghe is Welsh. They just went nuts. It was great. I remember I watched the (Oscar) De La Hoya-(Fernando) Vargas fight in Australia, at a Beach Club in Sydney. They had the fight on. Everyone was going crazy. It was a lot of fun.

Who's your favorite fighter?
Julio Cesar Chavez. He's everything you want in a fighter. I think he's a heavily skilled, natural-born fighter with a killer instinct who could bang. I like a guy who is skilled but isn't afraid to throw leather. That's what I want from a fan's perspective. I love (Bernard) Hopkins, the more technical fighters. I can get into that too. But there's a reason nobody cares about the Floyd Mayweather highlight reel. They care about the Arturo Gatti highlight reel. They want to see a guy who takes risks, a guy who is vulnerable and throws punches. That's Chavez.

You don't like to watch Mayweather?
I don't like the way he fights. It's not fan-friendly at all. He's just a blight on the sport in a lot of ways. Mostly he's just so f------ boring.

What's your favorite boxing movie?
The Fighter was pretty good. It's tough, though. They never get the boxing right. It always looks silly, like Rocky. I love Rocky. Rocky is probably the best boxing movie. I don't know. Maybe Raging Bull. It's hard to say.

If you could change one thing about boxing, what would it be?
You can debate how to do this but it would have to be getting the top guys to fight each other. So many things would have to change, though. We'd have to get rid of the sanctioning bodies to have a UFC type of organization, which would never happen in boxing. We have to give it up for those (UFC) guys. Their top guys fight each other. And when somebody loses, it doesn't end their careers. There's so much wrong with boxing. The top people have to fight each other. Mayweather and (Manny) Pacquiao isn't happening for some reason. It's bad for the sport. I think we need a national commission to do it right. ■

Golden Boy Promotions founder and president **Oscar De La Hoya** kicked off September with a bombshell, publicly admitting to past behavior that included cocaine and alcohol abuse, infidelity and suicidal thoughts (and, yes, the photos were real). Having reached what he termed "rock bottom," De La Hoya entered rehab, joined Alcoholics Anonymous and now looks forward with a renewed sense of gratitude to living "a clean, sober life" ... The turmoil surrounding the estate of **Arturo Gatti** increased, along with a general feeling of nausea among observers, on Sept. 6 with the launching of a civil trial in Montreal. Gatti's widow, **Amanda Rodrigues**, claims that a will drafted shortly before the late boxer's untimely passing in July 2009 leaves his fortune to her, while the family rejects the validity of that document. The next day, in New Jersey, a panel of forensic experts released the results of their 10-month look into the evidence surrounding Gatti's death. The conclusion? Murder. Following that, a wrongful death suit was filed on behalf of Gatti's 5-year-old daughter, Sofia, against Rodrigues, who, the court papers claim "did violently bludgeon and asphyxiate the decedent resulting in his death." The judge in the Montreal case urged the parties to settle, warning that there would be no money left to fight over, but Rodrigues rejected any compromise ... Perennial source of surprises **Mike Tyson** continued his evolution toward mainstream success by inking a deal with HBO to produce a pilot based on his early years in boxing. The drama, called "Da Brick," has **Spike Lee** attached to direct, as well as the involvement of "Entourage" creator **Doug Ellin**. Tyson also appeared on an episode of the CBS reality show "Same Name," in which he swapped lives with a male nurse, also named Mike Tyson, in small-town Michigan ... **The American Academy of Pediatrics** released a study showing that, in the decade between the 1990s and 2000s, the boxing-related injury rate rose 40 percent. It went on to say that no evidence exists to support that safety equipment helps prevent brain injuries, and that more kids took a trip to the hospital because of boxing than any other combat sport ... While in Manilla to promote a real-estate company (or maybe take a vacation after being named one of America's "most-hated celebrities"), Los Angeles socialite **Paris Hilton** attended a dinner party hosted by **Manny Pacquiao** and his wife, **Jinkee**. Pacquiao cemented the friendship with Hilton, whom he met in Las Vegas after his fight with **Shane Mosley**, by giving her a tiny dog and a T-shirt emblazoned with his portrait. She was later seen sporting the new threads at the airport (no sign of the dog) ... Moved by the horrific attacks of July 22, in which a Norwegian man detonated a car bomb and subsequently went on a shooting rampage that altogether left 77 people dead and another 96 injured, boxing great **Muhammad Ali** sent a letter to the people of Norway expressing his condolences. The gunman had cited multiculturalism and an influx of Muslims as motives for his actions, views which Ali countered with words of solidarity, saying that those like him "fail to understand that we share far more with our fellow beings than those aspects that set us apart." ... **Floyd Mayweather Jr.**, on a quest to acquire the numbers of an all-time great, earned one of dubious distinction in August: The seventh civil lawsuit in the past three years was filed against him by two men claiming that a member of Mayweather's entourage fired shots at them. Other recent allegations include assault by Mayweather himself or his bodyguards, unpaid rent and legal bills, defamation of character and failing to pay for his Mercedes Maybach 57S. ■

Brian Harty

CONSEQUENCES OF A LIFE LIVED ON THE EDGE

WORDS: **DON STRADLEY**
IMAGE: **JIM EVERETT / FIGHTWIRE IMAGES**

Oscar De La Hoya said during a 2006 *Los AngelesTimes* interview that his favorite movie was *The Thomas Crown Affair*. He confirmed his affection for the movie when he named his 74-foot yacht the "Tommy Crown."

De La Hoya's fascination with the film was revealing. The title character, originally played by Steve McQueen and later by Pierce Brosnan, is a bored millionaire playboy in search of thrills. When crashing cars and making outlandish bets are not enough, he resorts to organizing an elaborate art heist. Crown gets away unscathed, and even manages to seduce a sexy insurance investigator. De La Hoya, still in the midst of a wildly successful boxing career that included masses of female groupies, may have imagined a little of the dashing Thomas Crown in himself. Unfortunately, De La Hoya's wilder pursuits landed him in the Betty Ford Center in Rancho Mirage, Calif.

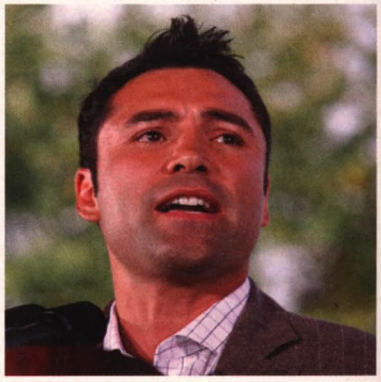
When the news broke last May, De La Hoya's substance abuse problems seemed like a minor story that would be quickly forgotten. It wasn't until late August when De La Hoya spoke openly on the Spanish TV network Univision that the seriousness of his situation came to light – he was an alcoholic, his marriage to Millie Corretjer was suffering from his infidelities and he had suicidal thoughts.

The media latched onto the seedier aspects of De La Hoya's confession, particularly the massive payout required to silence Siberian model Milana Dravnel, the woman who'd taken the controversial photos of Oscar that hit the internet in 2007.

With those elements of the story out of the way, De La Hoya discussed his hopes that something positive can come from his ordeal. He told *The Las Vegas-Review Journal*, "If I can help one person get their life back in order because I went public with my addiction, then it was worth it."

De La Hoya's revelation received much support and encouragement, but the goodwill was not unanimous. Wealthy celebrities with problems are easy targets for a hostile, underpaid press, and some of the reactions to De La Hoya's story, especially in the New York tabloids, were unsympathetic. Even the timing of De La Hoya's disclosure was scrutinized, since it came just before the biggest Golden Boy Promotions event of the year: the Floyd Mayweather-Victor Ortiz bout. De La Hoya's critics felt that waiting until after the fight might've made his statements feel less like self-promotion, but owning up to past mistakes is a major part of recovery, and De La Hoya seems determined to get back on track.

Business-wise, De La Hoya's announcement cost him his role as brand ambassador for *Tres Generaciones* tequila. But De La Hoya probably has more on his mind than the loss of an endorsement.



Oscar De La Hoya publicly admitted to a variety of self-destructive behavior.

De La Hoya has had a life of tremendous highs and tremendous lows. He lost his mother to cancer at a young age, and although he has worn his fame well, hitting the big time brought its own burdens. Alcohol became a handy buffer.

"It took me to a place where I felt safe," he told Univision. "It took me to a place where I felt as if nobody can say anything to me, it took me to a place where I just can reach out and grab my mom."

De La Hoya has learned there is no such place. He's also learned that, unlike Thomas Crown, very few people can live life on the edge without facing some consequences. ■

Don Stradley

1933 - 2011
GEORGE BENTON

WORDS: **DON STRADLEY**

One of the enduring memories we have of George Benton was the look of disdain he gave Andrew Golota when Golota quit on his stool after two rounds with Mike Tyson. Benton, working Golota's corner, scowled at his fighter as if to say, "Are you kidding me?"

Benton, who died at 78 on Sept. 19 after a two-week struggle with pneumonia (he'd had various other health problems for several years), was not known for emotional outbursts. But those who knew Benton understood his disgust with Golota. Benton had been through a lot, including a poor upbringing in Depression-era North Philadelphia and a gunshot wound that nearly ended his life. As far as Benton was concerned, two rounds with Tyson was a cakewalk.

Born May 15, 1933, Benton turned pro at 16. He boxed in the Philadelphia area for the next 20 years, amassing a record of 62-13-1 (37 knockouts) against the likes of Joey Giardello, Rubin Carter and Bennie Briscoe. A slick middleweight with, in his own words, "eyes in my ass," Benton was well-regarded but never received a title shot.

"The middleweight title changed hands 22 times during George's career, and he never got close to it," said Philadelphia promoter J Russell Peltz. "George's manager, Herman Diamond, wouldn't do business with the mob."

Benton was still fighting in 1970 when a street incident landed him in the hospital with a bullet in his back. The near-fatal shooting ended his career but by the mid 1970s he was busy as a trainer, working with Joe Frazier, Leon Spinks and even his old rival Briscoe.

Benton's greatest era began in the 1980s when he was hired by Main Events to train fighters managed by Lou Duva. The irony was that Duva had been one of those "connected" people who worked in boxing in the 1960s.

"Yeah, I screwed George out of his shot," Duva admitted to Sports Illustrated in 1992. "He didn't even know about it till I told him many years later."

Even if Benton was overshadowed by the colorful Duva, most regarded the laconic Benton as the key behind such Duva fighters as

Evander Holyfield, Meldrick Taylor and Pernell Whitaker. "The smartest thing Main Events ever did was hire George," said Peltz. Benton probably didn't mind that Duva attracted the bulk of the publicity, because it was through Main Events that Benton became a millionaire.

Benton was named Trainer of the Year in 1989 and 1990 by the Boxing Writers Association of America, and was elected to the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 2001. He is survived by his wife Mildred and many children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

"He was one of the Top 10 fighters to come out of Philadelphia," Peltz told The Ring. "He was defensive, but he wasn't a runner. He was in the pocket; he'd get right in your face and make you miss. George passed his style on to Whitaker. Whitaker was flashier, but a lot of his moves were George's old moves." ■

THE RING ASKED THREE NOTED STRENGTH AND CONDITION COACHES:

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST MISTAKE FIGHTERS MAKE IN TERMS OF THEIR PHYSICAL FITNESS?

WORDS: **DAVE McKEE** / IMAGES: **NAOKI FUKUDA**

ALEX ARIZA

Clients: Manny Pacquiao, Amir Khan, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., Jorge Linares.

Inactivity between fights. Training camps are only seven weeks long, maybe eight weeks. You just begin to establish a pattern during that time. Not just your metabolism but the way your body digests food and recovery, the whole gamut of changes. The body is just starting to come into its own; it starts becoming a food burner. The fighter who then becomes inactive between fights slows down his metabolism. That's when you see the massive weight gains. It's about maintaining consistency. No one is saying you can't eat. You just shouldn't be a glutton about it just because a fight is over. That's not a pass to allow yourself to get completely out of shape. Boxing is the only sport in the world where you have that amount of time off. It's a problem. There's nothing wrong with working out three or four times a week for 20 minutes a day. And just don't eat crap every meal. There's a certain level of discipline you have to develop in boxing to be successful.

DARRYL HUDSON

Among clients: Chris Arreola, Alfredo Angulo, Chad Dawson, Wink Wright, Mikey Garcia.

Fighters make a lot of mistakes. One is they take nutrition for granted. And they take getting rest for granted. People in general eat according to taste, not health. That's a problem. You have to be cautious about how much weight you gain between fights. Fighters who start camp 75 percent in shape have a big advantage over a fighter who starts at 30 percent in shape. When a fighter comes into camp overweight, you have to spend three, four weeks losing the weight. That's time that could've been spent making him stronger and focusing on the boxing side, speed and quickness. You focus on things like agility when you come in overweight. Gaining weight has to do with nutrition. If you're a boxer, this is your profession, your job. You can take time off after a fight but you should be actively resting. You should maintain a level of activity – running or weights, one or the other. You don't have to go to the gym. Just watch what you eat and stay active.

ROBERT FERGUSON

Among clients: Fernando Vargas, Sergio Mora, Lucia Rijker, Alfonso Gomez, Steve Forbes.

The No. 1 problem is dropping weight too fast in the beginning stages of training camp. It's overtraining and bringing their calories down too soon. That's why they have ongoing problems with the weight. The body is always looking to adapt to the physical demands placed on it. You start off by running five miles to lose weight going into training camp, which your body adapts to. Then you have to run 5½ to experience similar results after the first three to five weeks (of camp). Your body adapts again. Then you have to do more and more. And let's say you eat three ounces of chicken breast to lose weight in the beginning of camp. Your body adapts to that. Then you will need to eat two ounces to lose weight. And you have to keep cutting. Then the fighter doesn't understand why he didn't have energy in his fight. Probably the most-famous example of this was Oscar De La Hoya against (Manny) Pacquiao. He didn't know he had a problem until the first punch. Then it was too late. ■

James Toney apparently never learned that improper nutrition is one of the biggest problems among boxers.

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

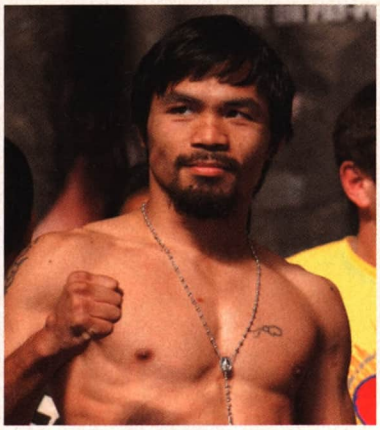
FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.

The bizarre ending became the storyline. Victor Ortiz momentarily thought he was in a hug-a-thon instead of a prizefight. At the same time, Joe Cortez neglected to add 'aware' to his fair-but-firm approach. It was a shame, because Floyd Mayweather Jr. did some pretty nice work before Ortiz forgot to defend himself.

"Money" stepped back into the ring after a 16-month layoff and, in just his third fight in more than 3½ years, the 34-year-old was still able to dominate the No. 2-rated welterweight in the world. Despite giving up 14 pounds to Ortiz on HBO's unofficial fight-night scales, Mayweather punished Ortiz with right hands throughout the first three rounds as the 24-year-old southpaw had no answer for Mayweather's hand speed or defense. Ortiz had his moments in the fourth, when he became more aggressive, but the strange KO at the end of the round might have only hastened the inevitable.

Just as inevitable was the post-fight criticism from the anti-Mayweather crowd. Mayweather might never earn the distinction of being boxing's most-beloved figure, but even the haters have to admit he's pretty darn good. And for this month, he was easily good enough to earn recognition as Fighter of the Month.

IMAGES: CHRIS COZZONE / FIGHTWIRE IMAGES



RATINGS ANALYSIS

FOR PERIOD ENDED SEPT. 19, 2011

HEAVYWEIGHTS: Alexander Povetkin (No. 3 last issue) moves to No. 2 on the strength of his win over Ruslan Chagaev (No. 5 last issue). Povetkin's advancement bumps down Tomasz Adamek (No. 2 last issue) to No. 3, while Chagaev tumbles to No. 9. The shakeup also elevates Eddie Chambers (No. 6 last issue) to No. 5, while Robert Helenius (No. 9 last issueh) jumps to No. 6 after knocking out Sergei Liakhovich. Adamek was stopped by Vitali Klitschko in 10 rounds but retained his No. 3 position.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No changes

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Glen Johnson (No. 4 last issue) departs because it has been more than a year since he last fought at 175 pounds. Johnson's two most-recent bouts were at super middleweight and he has signed to fight Lucian Bute, also at 168 pounds. Johnson, however, retains his No. 7 rating at super middleweight. His exit from the light heavyweight division allows all rated below No. 4 last issue to climb one rung each and makes room for Ismayl Sillakh to debut at No. 10.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Dimitri Sartison (No. 9 last issue) exits because he has not fought in more than a year. His departure allows Thomas Oosthuizen to advance from No. 10 to No. 9, and makes room for George Groves to debut at No. 10.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

WELTERWEIGHTS: The ratings in the 147-pound division were adjusted two times the past month. Jan Zaveck (No. 4 last issue) slipped to No. 5 following his TKO loss to Andre Berto, who retained his No. 3 spot. Zaveck's demotion advanced Wyacheslav Senchenko (No. 5 last issue) to No. 4. Then Floyd Mayweather Jr. re-entered the ratings at No. 2 after his KO of Victor Ortiz. That pushed everyone at No. 2 and below down one notch. That included Ortiz, who dropped only to No. 3 because of the bizarre nature of his loss. Selcuk Aydin (No. 10 last issue) is out.

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS: Andreas Kotelnik (No. 5 last issue) drops out due to inactivity. Kotelnik's most-recent bout was on August 7, 2010. All fighters rated No. 6 or below last issue climb one rung each, and Mike Alvarado enters at No. 10.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Humberto Soto (No. 2 last issue) leaves the 135-pound class to fight at junior welterweight. All rated No. 3 or below last issue advance one position each and Jorge Linares fills the void at No. 10.

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS: Juan Carlos Salgado (No. 5 last issue) defeated Argenis Mendez (No. 8 last issue) and switches positions with Roman Martinez (No. 4 last issue), who hasn't fought since September of last year. Martinez remains in the ratings even though he's been inactive for more than year because he has a fight scheduled for Oct. 1. Mendez drops to No. 10.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

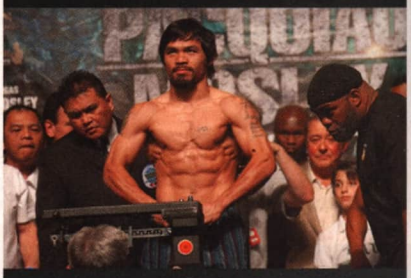
JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS: This was a busy division. Suriyan Sor Rungvisia's decision over Tomas Rojas and Chistian Mijares' announcement that he is moving up in weight caused one shakeup. Rungvisia entered at No. 3, while Rojas slipped from No. 2 to No. 4. Rojas' demotion also advanced Omar Narvaez (No. 3 last issue) to No. 2. Nobuo Nashiro (No. 4 last week), Yota Sato (No. 5 last issue) and Cesar Seda (No. 9 last issue) dropped one spot each in order to accommodate Rungvisia's debut. Then previously unrated Tomonobu Shimizu upset Hugo Cazares (No 1 last issue). That moved Narvaez to No. 1, while Shimizu entered at No. 2. Cazares tumbled to No. 3. All rated No. 3 or below moved down one spot and Drain Francisco (No. 10 last issue) was forced out.

FLYWEIGHTS: Milan Melindo (No. 8 last issue) stopped former title challenger Francisco Rosas in the 10th round, allowing him swap places with Rocky Fuentes (No. 7 last issue) because he has faced better opposition.

JR. FLYWEIGHTS: Giovani Segura relinquished his championship and moved up in weight. The title is now vacant.

STRAWWEIGHTS: Donnie Nietes (No. 4 last issue) departs because he is now campaigning at junior flyweight and is scheduled to challenge for an alphabet title a 108 pounds. The void is filled by Moises Fuentez who upset Raul Garcia (No. 3 last issue). Fuentes enters at No. 3, while Gracia drops to No. 4.

POUND FOR POUND



1. **MANNY PACQUIAO** *WELTERWEIGHT*
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.,** *WELTERWEIGHT*
3. **SERGIO MARTINEZ** *MIDDLEWEIGHT*
4. **NONITO DONAIRE** *BANTAMWEIGHT*
5. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** *LIGHTWEIGHT*
6. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** *HEAVYWEIGHT*
7. **TIM BRADLEY** *JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT*
8. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM** *FLYWEIGHT*
9. **GIOVANNI SEGURA** *FLYWEIGHT*
10. **ANDRE WARD** *SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT*

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, which the Top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING's No. 1 and No. 2 contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our No. 1 and No. 3 contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division or is defeated in a championship bout.

THE RING Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of THE RING Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on RATINGS at RingTV.com.

Records provided by boxrec.com

IMAGES: CHRIS COZZONE / FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

RATINGS

AS OF SEPT., 19, 2011

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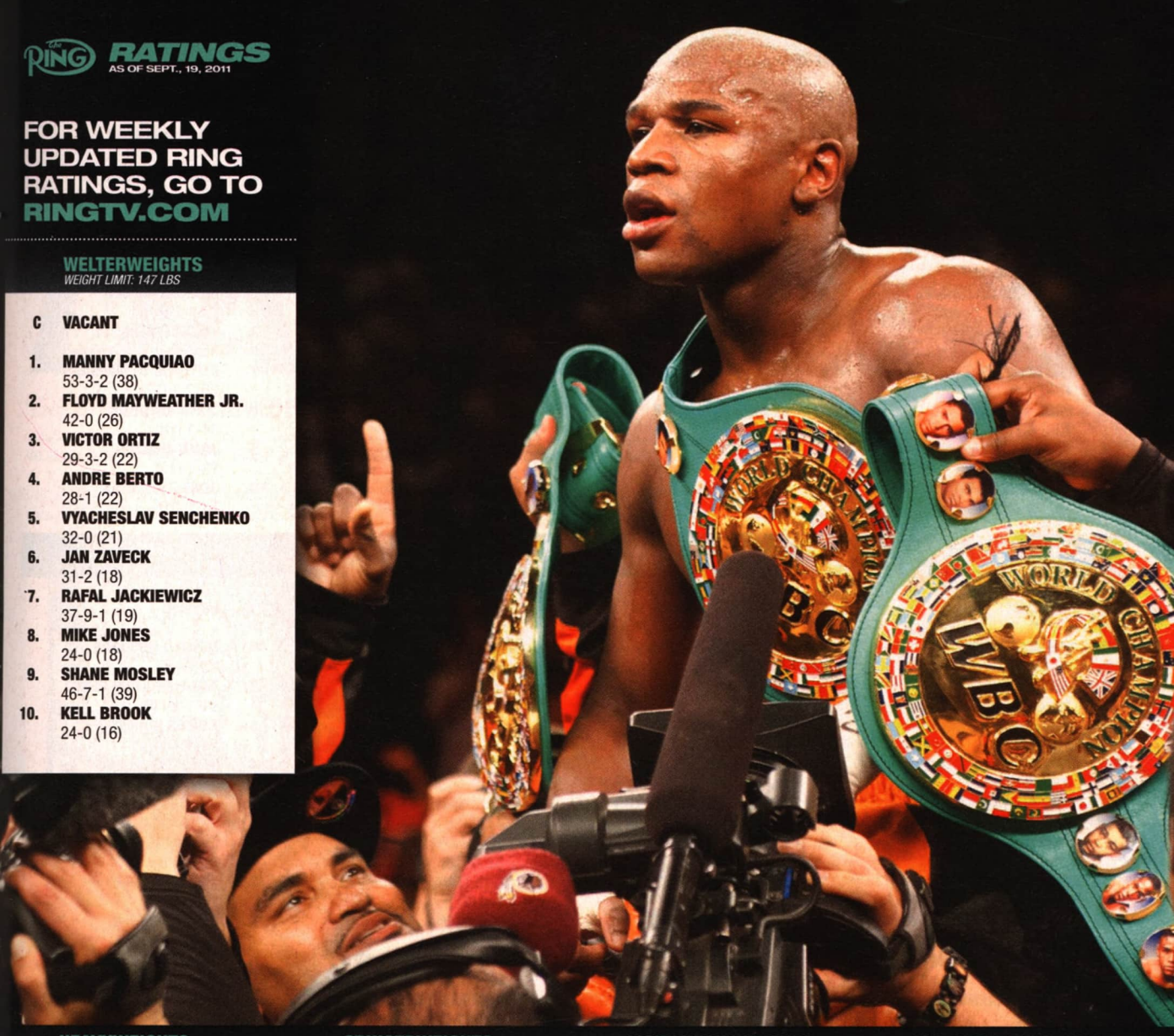


WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**MANNY PACQUIAO** 53-3-2 (38)
2.	**FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.** 42-0 (26)
3.	**VICTOR ORTIZ** 29-3-2 (22)
4.	**ANDRE BERTO** 28-1 (22)
5.	**VYACHESLAV SENCHENKO** 32-0 (21)
6.	**JAN ZAVECK** 31-2 (18)
7.	**RAFAL JACKIEWICZ** 37-9-1 (19)
8.	**MIKE JONES** 24-0 (18)
9.	**SHANE MOSLEY** 46-7-1 (39)
10.	**KELL BROOK** 24-0 (16)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C	**WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** 56-3 (49)
1.	**VITALI KLITSCHKO** 43-2 (40)
2.	**ALEXANDER POVETKIN** 22-0 (15)
3.	**TOMASZ ADAMEK** 44-2 (28)
4.	**DAVID HAYE** 25-2 (23)
5.	**EDDIE CHAMBERS** 36-2 (18)
6.	**ROBERT HELENIUS** 16-0 (11)
7.	**ALEXANDER DIMITRENKO** 31-1 (21)
8.	**DENIS BOYTSOV** 27-0 (22)
9.	**RUSLAN CHAGAEV** 26-2-1 (17)
10.	**CHRIS ARREOLA** 33-2 (28)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**STEVE CUNNINGHAM** 24-2 (12)
2.	**MARCO HUCK** 33-1 (24)
3.	**KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK** 45-2-1 (32)
4.	**DENIS LEBEDEV** 22-1 (17)
5.	**TROY ROSS** 24-2 (16)
6.	**ANTONIO TARVER** 29-6 (20)
7.	**GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI** 28-3-1 (12)
8.	**OLA AFOLABI** 18-2-3 (8)
9.	**GUILLERMO JONES** 37-3-2 (29)
10.	**DANNY GREEN** 31-4 (27)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C	**BERNARD HOPKINS** 52-5-2 (32)
1.	**JEAN PASCAL** 26-2-1 (16)
2.	**TAVORIS CLOUD** 23-0 (19)
3.	**CHAD DAWSON** 30-1 (17)
4.	**NATHAN CLEVERLY** 22-0 (11)
5.	**ADRIAN DIACONU** 27-3 (15)
6.	**ZSOLT ERDEI** 33-0 (18)
7.	**BEIBUT SHUMENOV** 12-1 (8)
8.	**KARO MURAT** 23-1 (14)
9.	**GABRIEL CAMPILLO** 20-3 (7)
10.	**ISMAYL SILLAKH** 16-0 (13)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

C	**VACANT**
1.	**ANDRE WARD** 24-0 (13)
2.	**CARL FROCH** 28-1 (20)
3.	**LUCIAN BUTE** 29-0 (24)
4.	**MIKKEL KESSLER** 43-2 (32)
5.	**ROBERT STIEGLITZ** 40-2 (23)
6.	**SAKIO BIKA** 28-5-2 (19)
7.	**GLEN JOHNSON** 51-15-2 (35)
8.	**ARTHUR ABRAHAM** 32-3 (26)
9.	**THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN** 16-0-1 (11)
10.	**GEORGE GROVES** 13-0 (10)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

C	**SERGIO MARTINEZ**	47-2-2 (26)
1.	**FELIX STURM**	36-2-1 (15)
2.	**DANIEL GEALE**	25-1 (15)
3.	**MATTHEW MACKLIN**	28-3 (19)
4.	**SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER**	33-4-1 (16)
5.	**JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR.**	43-0-1 (30)
6.	**SEBASTIAN ZBIK**	30-1 (10)
7.	**DMITRY PIROG**	18-0 (14)
8.	**PAUL WILLIAMS**	40-2 (27)
9.	**HASSAN N'DAM N'JIKAM**	26-0 (17)
10.	**MARCO ANTONIO RUBIO**	55-5-1 (44)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

C	**VACANT**	
1.	**MIGUEL COTTO**	36-2 (29)
2.	**ALFREDO ANGULO**	20-1 (17)
3.	**SAUL ALVAREZ**	38-0-1 (28)
4.	**VANES MARTIROSYAN**	30-0 (19)
5.	**ERISLANDY LARA**	15-1-1 (10)
6.	**CARLOS MOLINA**	19-4-2 (6)
7.	**CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE**	31-4 (18)
8.	**SERGIY DZINZIRUK**	37-1 (23)
9.	**PAWEL WOLAK**	29-1-1 (19)
10.	**AUSTIN TROUT**	23-0 (13)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

C	**VACANT**	
1.	**AMIR KHAN**	26-1 (18)
2.	**TIMOTHY BRADLEY**	27-0 (11)
3.	**MARCOS MAIDANA**	29-2 (27)
4.	**DEVON ALEXANDER**	22-1 (13)
5.	**LUCAS MATTHYSSE**	28-2 (26)
6.	**LAMONT PETERSON**	29-1-1 (15)
7.	**ERIK MORALES**	52-7 (36)
8.	**ZAB JUDAH**	41-7 (28)
9.	**DANNY GARCIA**	21-0 (14)
10.	**MIKE ALVARADO**	31-0 (22)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

C	**JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**	53-5-1 (39)
1.	**BRANDON RIOS**	28-0-1 (21)
2.	**ROBERT GUERRERO**	29-1-1 (18)
3.	**KEVIN MITCHELL**	32-1 (24)
4.	**MIGUEL ACOSTA**	28-4-2 (22)
5.	**PAULUS MOSES**	27-1 (19)
6.	**MIGUEL VAZQUEZ**	29-3 (13)
7.	**ANTONIO DEMARCO**	25-2-1 (18)
8.	**JOHN MURRAY**	31-1 (18)
9.	**JOHN MOLINA**	23-1 (19)
10.	**JORGE LINARES**	31-1 (20)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C	**VACANT**	
1.	**MZONKE FANA**	30-4 (12)
2.	**RICKY BURNS**	32-2 (9)
3.	**TAKASHI UCHIYAMA**	17-0 (14)
4.	**JUAN CARLOS SALGADO**	23-1-1 (16)
5.	**ROMAN MARTINEZ**	24-1-1 (15)
6.	**JORGE SOLIS**	40-2-2 (29)
7.	**TAKAHIRO AO**	21-2-1 (10)
8.	**ADRIEN BRONER**	21-0 (17)
9.	**DIEGO MAGDALENO**	20-0 (7)
10.	**ARGENIS MENDEZ**	18-2 (9)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C	**VACANT**	
1.	**YURIORKIS GAMBOA**	21-0 (16)
2.	**CHRIS JOHN**	45-0-2 (22)
3.	**ORLANDO SALIDO**	36-11-2 (24)
4.	**JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ**	30-1 (27)
5.	**DANIEL PONCE DE LEON**	41-4 (34)
6.	**CRISTOBAL CRUZ**	39-12-3 (39)
7.	**RAFAEL MARQUEZ**	40-6 (36)
8.	**JHONNY GONZALEZ**	50-7 (44)
9.	**MIKEY GARCIA**	26-0 (22)
10.	**BILL DIB**	32-1 (19)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C	**VACANT**	
1.	**TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**	38-4-3 (24)
2.	**RICO RAMOS**	20-0 (11)
3.	**AKIFUMA SHIMODA**	23-3-1 (10)
4.	**RYOL LI LEE**	18-2-1 (9)
5.	**POONSAWAT KRATINGDAENGGYM**	44-2 (30)
6.	**TAKALANI NDLOVU**	32-6 (18)
7.	**GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**	8-0 (6)
8.	**STEVE MOLITOR**	33-2 (12)
9.	**JORGE ARCE**	57-6-2 (44)
10.	**WILFREDO VAZQUEZ JR.**	20-1-1 (17)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C	**VACANT**	
1.	**NONITO DONAIRE**	26-1 (18)
2.	**ANSELMO MORENO**	31-1-1 (11)
3.	**ABNER MARES**	22-0-1 (13)
4.	**JOSEPH AGBEKO**	28-3 (22)
5.	**VIC DARCHINYAN**	37-3-1 (27)
6.	**ERIC MOREL**	45-2 (23)
7.	**YONNHY PEREZ**	20-2-1 (14)
8.	**KOKI KAMEDA**	26-1 (16)
9.	**MALCOLM TUNACAO**	28-2-3 (17)
10.	**CHRISTIAN ESQUIVEL**	23-2 (17)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C	**VACANT**	
1.	**OMAR NARVAEZ**	35-0-2 (19)
2.	**TOMONOBU SHIMIZU**	19-3-1 (9)
3.	**HUGO CAZARES**	35-7-2 (25)
4.	**SURIYAN SOR RUNGVISAI**	19-5-1 (7)
5.	**TOMAS ROJAS**	36-13-1 (24)
6.	**NOBUO NASHIRO**	15-3-1 (9)
7.	**YOTA SATO**	21-2-1 (11)
8.	**TEPPARITH SINGWANCHA**	16-2 (10)
9.	**JUAN ALBERTO ROSAS**	32-6 (26)
10.	**CESAR SEDA**	21-1 (15)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C	**PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**	82-3-1 (45)
1.	**HERNAN MARQUEZ**	31-2- (24)
2.	**LUIS CONCEPCION**	22-2 (17)
3.	**DENKAOSAN KAOVICHIT**	53-3-1 (22)
4.	**TAKEFUMI SAKATA**	36-6-2 (17)
5.	**MORUTI MTHALANE**	27-2 (18)
6.	**BRIAN VILORIA**	29-3 (16)
7.	**MILAN MELINDO**	25-0 (8)
8.	**ROCKY FUENTES**	29-6-2 (18)
9.	**EDGAR SOSA**	41-6 (24)
10.	**JULIO CESAR MIRANDA**	35-6-1 (28)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C	**GIOVANI SEGURA**	28-1-1 (24)
1.	**ADRIAN HERNANDEZ**	21-1 (13)
2.	**GILBERTO KEB BAAS**	35-21-4 (22)
3.	**OMAR NINO**	30-4-2 (12)
4.	**IVAN CALDERON**	34-2-1 (6)
5.	**ULISES SOLIS**	34-2-3 (21)
6.	**ROMAN GONZALEZ**	28-0 (23)
7.	**LUIS ALBERTO LAZARTE**	49-10-2 (18)
8.	**RAMON HIRALES**	16-2-1 (9)
9.	**MASAYUKI KURODA**	20-3 (13)
10.	**RYO MIYAZAKI**	14-0-3 (8)

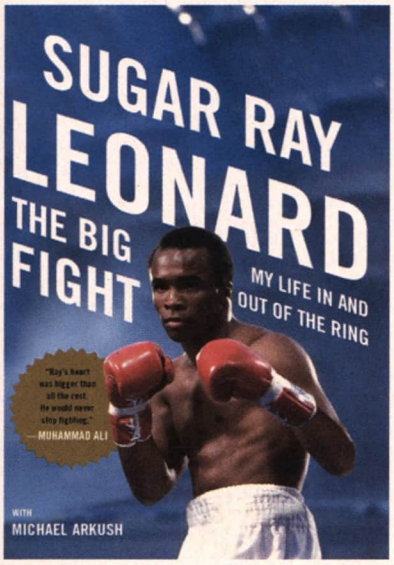
STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C	VACANT	
1.	**NKOSINATHI JOYI**	21-0 (15)
2.	**KAZUTO IOKA**	8-0 (5)
3.	**MOISES FUENTES**	14-1 (6)
4.	**RAUL GARCIA**	30-2-1 (18)
5.	**JUAN PALACIOS**	29-3 (22)
6.	**WANHENG MENAYOTHIN**	17-0 (4)
7.	**DENVER CUELLO**	26-4-6 (16)
8.	**KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**	24-4 (10)
9.	**FLORANTE CONDES**	25-6-1 (21)
10.	**PORNSAWAN PORPRAMOOK**	23-3-1 (16)

RAY OF DARKNESS

THE BIG FIGHT PROVIDES A GLIMPSE OF LEONARD'S SORDID PAST BUT HE HOLDS BACK

WORDS: **DON STRADLEY** / IMAGES: **ED MULHOLLAND / RENAY JOHNSON / FIGHTWIREIMAGES**



EXCERPT FROM *THE BIG FIGHT: MY LIFE IN AND OUT OF THE RING*, BY SUGAR RAY LEONARD

Being Sugar Ray came with a cost, as always. The women I attracted were as devious as I was. Two examples stand out. I'm sure there are many others I've conveniently chosen to forget.

One was in Alaska, of all places, where Kenny and I went to make a personal appearance. I did tons of meet and greets in those days. It didn't take much time and the money was good.

After business came pleasure. My brother and I scored some of the best blow of our lives and shared it with this incredibly sexy woman. After we gave her a clean new T-shirt to wear, she went into the bathroom to try it on. When she returned, the T-shirt was all she had on. The action got hot and heavy until everyone went to sleep. A few hours later, when he and I woke up, the woman and the coke were gone. She was a pro and we never saw her again. On another occasion, I got up in the morning at the Alexis Park Resort Hotel in Vegas after spending the night with a girl I met at a club and discovered that my money and jewelry, estimated at about $35,000 were missing. I informed hotel security, who wanted to make a full report to the police. Eager to avoid the publicity, I asked them not to bother, although the robbery somehow made it into the papers. What happens in Vegas, apparently, does not always stay in Vegas. I did learn another important lesson. From then on, whenever I had a girl, I stashed valuables in the hotel safe or under the mattress.

At home in Maryland, my judgment could be just as cloudy. One time, and I still can't believe I did this, I took the Mercedes I had purchased for Juanita and drove to another girl's apartment. Juanita says she never told little Ray about my flings but he knew. On nights I was out of town, when he heard her sobbing, he would slip under the covers to comfort her.

"Mommy, it's going to be ok," he said.

Juanita often took the kids and stayed with her mom for a day or two in nearby Largo. Yet, she would always return, granting me another chance. She loved me. That was her mistake.

If you have ever lingered in the company of reporters who'd been around during his heyday, you would sometimes hear tales of Sugar Ray Leonard's wicked, wicked ways. The stories typically involved Leonard and his henchmen creeping around in the early morning hours of some city, usually Las Vegas, trolling for drugs and nasty ladies. The picture that emerged of Leonard was of an insatiable party animal and a bit of a rube, the sort of character Budd Schulberg might've written about to describe the pitfalls of success in America.

As amusing as these anecdotes were, they had the believability of Bigfoot sightings. The sources were suspect, for by the end of his career, long removed from his days as the grinning Olympian who had charmed us all, Leonard was pegged as a huckster, a creation of television. Still, you wondered if the stories were true and if Leonard was just another athlete with no regard for anything but his own lust and appetite.

In Leonard's new book, *The Big Fight: My Life In and Out of the Ring*, (Viking, $26.95), Leonard admits to being a cocaine user, an alcoholic, a womanizer, a terrible husband and father, and a self-absorbed egomaniac. He surrounded himself with bloodsuckers that siphoned money from him, usually to pay for their own drug habits. He kept these losers handy because they gave him the attention he craved. Praise, it seemed, was nearly as addicting as any of the narcotics mentioned in *The Big Fight*, which feels like an apology for a life badly spent. It's also Leonard's way of telling those gossipy old writers that they didn't know half the story.

Between the fall of Muhammad Ali and the rise of Mike Tyson, boxing's spotlight shined brightest on Leonard. His ascent coincided with an unprecedented boxing boom, which included an explosion of television coverage and the rise of Las Vegas as boxing's new epicenter. The precocious kid who had covered his pimples with makeup and practiced smiling, hit upon a master stroke when he followed

"LOOKING BACK, I CAN OFFER NO DEFENSE FOR MY CONDUCT. **I WAS WRONG, AND I HAVE TO LIVE WITH THESE SINS, AND THE ONES TO COME, EVERY SINGLE DAY."**

– SUGAR RAY LEONARD, FROM *THE BIG FIGHT*

a buddy's advice to speak slowly, creating the smooth persona that made him a hit on Madison Avenue. As his star soared, every Leonard bout became a major media event. He thrived in the glow of the go-go '80s, his ever increasing paydays reflecting the "greed is good" sensibility that defined the era. Most believed he'd retire from boxing with no problems.

But Leonard never found his niche outside the ring, drifting from one unremarkable gig to another. It wasn't until his first wife filed for divorce that the darker aspects of his life were made public.

According to *The Big Fight*, Leonard spent those lost years like a bored rock star. "Cars, women, they were all toys," writes Leonard. He kept a loaded .38 in his house and shot out TV screens when he was angry, just like Elvis. That Leonard was never caught in a major scandal might be his most underrated achievement. There were many close calls, but he was blessed with a cat burglar's ability to stay one step ahead of the cops.

Still, the most surprising thing about *The Big Fight* is that it exists at all. In Leonard's day, he left many nosy reporters swinging at air, so adept was he at slipping personal questions. Yet here is his new book, available alongside those of Tatum O'Neal, Rob Lowe, Steven Tyler and dozens of other aging stars who have scored book deals thanks to their spotty personal lives.

But not only has Leonard entered the arena of gross public exhibitionism, he seems to be saying, *I will show you how low a man can go.*

Like most things in boxing, the tradition of the fighter's memoir dates all the way back to John L. Sullivan. *The Life and Reminiscences of a 19th Century Gladiator* was published shortly before Sullivan's 1892 bout with Gentleman Jim Corbett in New Orleans, a quick money tie-in to one of the biggest American events of the era. By the time the book was published again by Proteus Books in 1980, re-titled *I Can Lick Any Sonofabitch* in the House, many fighters had published autobiographies. The demand for first-hand tales of a famous fighter's life was strong enough that the likes of Jack Dempsey and Mickey Walker each published two in their lifetimes. These old-time memoirs, though, were often filled with chapters on the unlikeliest of subjects. Jack Johnson's 1927 memoir included a section on the importance of bananas.

In 1952, Rocky Graziano kicked the door off the hinges with *Somebody Up There Likes Me*, his frank description of his years as a street thug. The book earned radiant reviews, was made into a popular film and inspired more autobiographies that read like howls from the gutter, including Barney Ross' No Man Stands Alone, Floyd Patterson's *Victory Over Myself*, and in more recent times, Johnny Tapia's excellent *Mi Vida Loca*. But sometimes this new frankness bordered on repugnant, such as when Jake La Motta and two friends published the literary equivalent of a belch and called it *Raging Bull: My Story*.

La Motta was so bold in his revelations that a critic from The *Milwaukee Sentinel* wrote, "the reader is forced to wonder how much La Motta has exaggerated." La Motta's book wasn't a big seller, although it provided the loose basis for a film that was eventually regarded as a classic. La Motta wrote a second book, *Raging Bull II*. It didn't sell well. It wasn't very good.

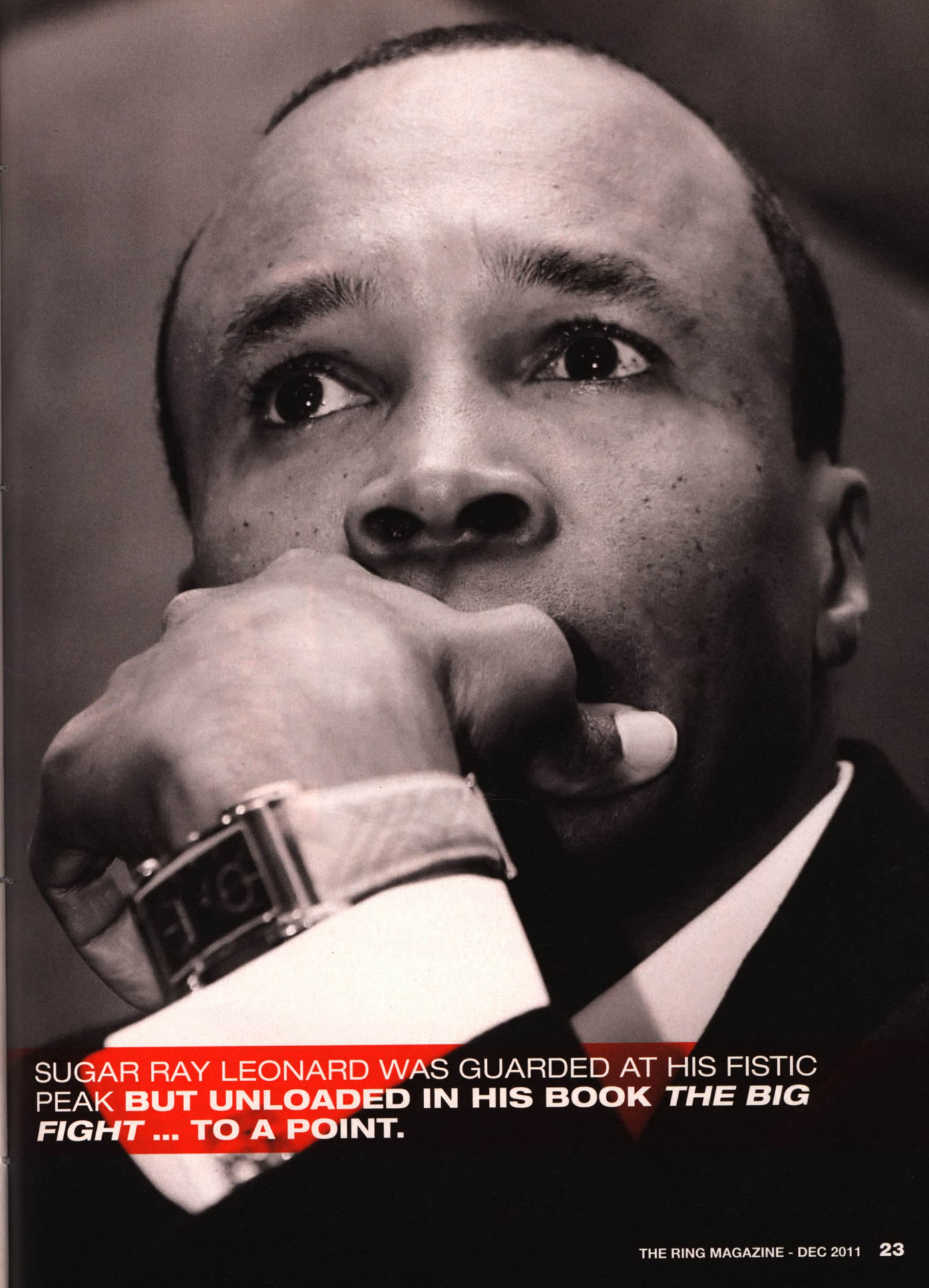
Fighter autobiographies still appear often thanks to the self-publishing racket, although mainstream publishers occasionally get involved. But regardless of who publishes them, most contemporary memoirs are awful. Fighters aren't writers, and the ghosts hired to help are usually deadline journalists uncomfortable with anything longer than an 800-word column. The books also feel dumbed down, as if publishers suspect boxing fans read at something below high school level.

Leonard's book is better than most, but it has problems, too. For one thing, his boxing career is so familiar that Leonard's recounting of it reveals nothing new. Also, Leonard's co-author Michael Arkush writes in such a breezy manner that the chapters lack drama.

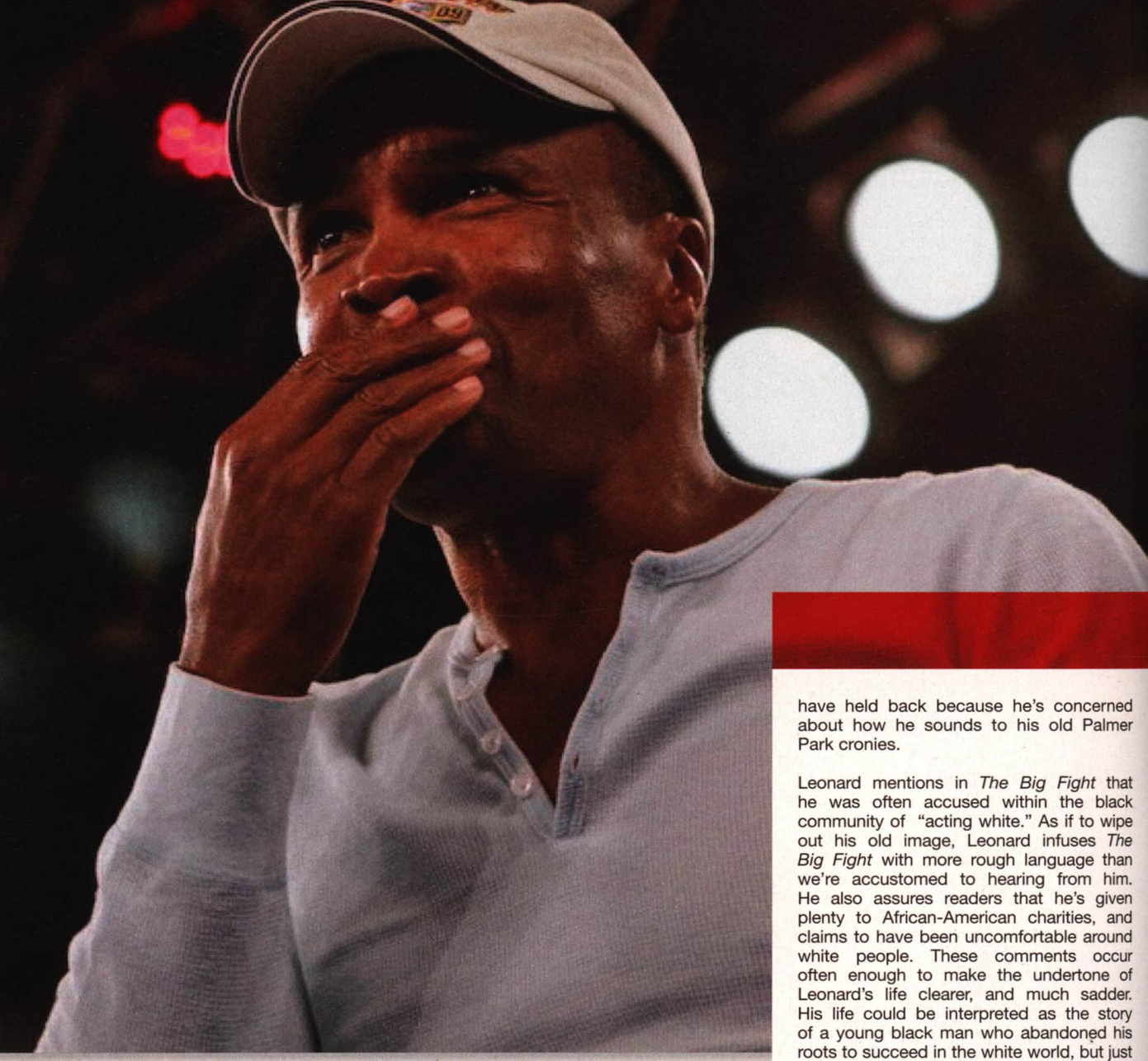
The book's initial blast of publicity stemmed from Leonard's disclosure that he'd been molested during his teen years. Some critics scolded Leonard for not naming names, while others even suggested Leonard was lying, which proves the old cynicism about Leonard is still alive. Leonard has said he didn't write the book to embarrass anyone, but to achieve catharsis. He told CNN in a tearful interview, "I had to get that out, because it was killing me inside. I was hurting big-time for 37 years."

Sex abuse is not a subject brought up casually, not in Leonard's time and not now. The fighter who had practiced giving interviews in mirrors was certainly not going to chat with Howard Cosell about the deviant old men in his past. Neither could he go to his Palmer Park gang and talk about it, for there was a part of Leonard that felt he'd "done something wrong," characteristic of an abuse victim. In one of the book's rare moments of insight, Leonard wonders if some of his fury in the ring was a result of subconsciously wanting to punish his molesters. Indeed, a few of Leonard's whirlwind finishes were eerily evocative of Emile Griffith pummeling Benny Paret in their third contest, a bout known for the homosexual innuendos surrounding it and its catastrophic ending.

Still, readers looking for a survivor's chronicle of sexual abuse will be disappointed, for most of *The Big Fight* is devoted to Leonard's drinking and womanizing. The final chapters race by. He marries again. He goes to AA. He's at peace. It is a happy ending, but it feels as



SUGAR RAY LEONARD WAS GUARDED AT HIS FISTIC PEAK **BUT UNLOADED IN HIS BOOK *THE BIG FIGHT* ... TO A POINT.**



LEONARD MENTIONS IN *THE BIG FIGHT* THAT HE WAS OFTEN **ACCUSED WITHIN THE BLACK COMMUNITY OF "ACTING WHITE."**

if Leonard simply wanted to end the book and move on.

Confessing may have been liberating, and many will consider the book a brave act, but confessions are easy compared to self-examination. There's no real attempt on Leonard's part at examining what might have caused his appalling behavior. Instead, Leonard writes, "I am not a psychologist." This spares him the grueling labor of self-assessment.

One senses that he wrote the book before he had the vocabulary to fully explore the issues of his earlier period. But he also may have held back because he's concerned about how he sounds to his old Palmer Park cronies.

Leonard mentions in *The Big Fight* that he was often accused within the black community of "acting white." As if to wipe out his old image, Leonard infuses *The Big Fight* with more rough language than we're accustomed to hearing from him. He also assures readers that he's given plenty to African-American charities, and claims to have been uncomfortable around white people. These comments occur often enough to make the undertone of Leonard's life clearer, and much sadder. His life could be interpreted as the story of a young black man who abandoned his roots to succeed in the white world, but just as his journey began he was traumatized by perverts, forever marking him with such deep unhappiness that not even his greatest victories could soothe him. He turned to drugs and alcohol, and nearly killed himself. It is the stuff of German cinema, or Theodore Dreiser novels. He is a tragic figure.

The Big Fight doesn't feel tragic, though. Leonard, at heart, is a shrewd man, a cautious man, and he wasn't likely to produce the sort of epic book his life deserved. He prefers to communicate in carefully considered sound bytes. Maybe that's why *The Big Fight* feels slight. Leonard and Arkush could've written a weighty book about race and fame and the American culture. Instead, they gave us an episode of *Celebrity Rehab*. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to ***THE RING.***

AT THE FIGHTS

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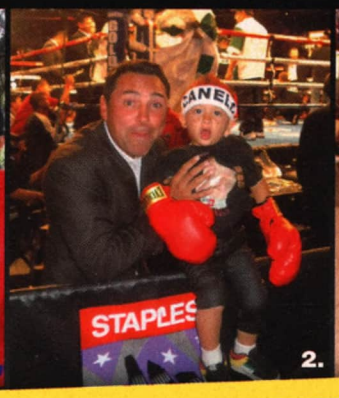

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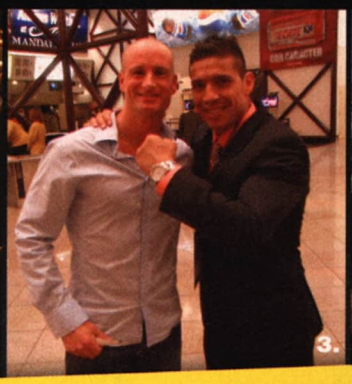
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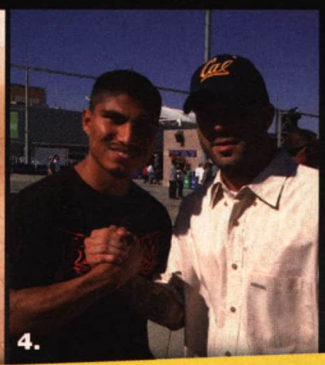
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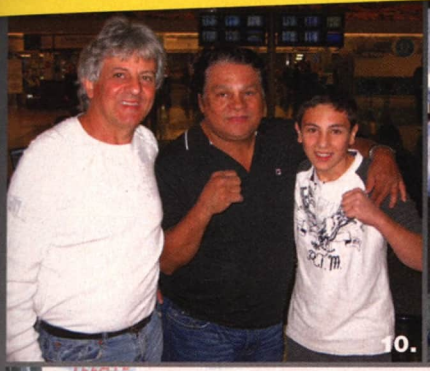
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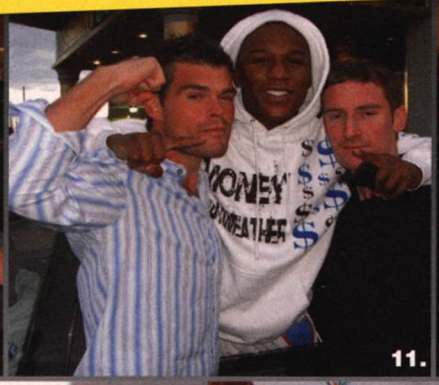

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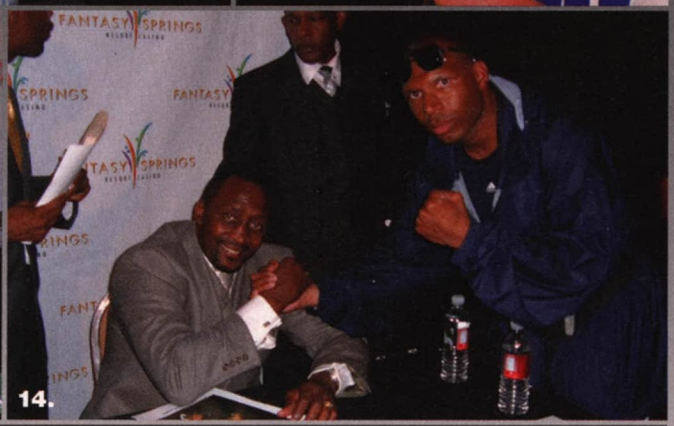

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1. Boxing Champ Manny Pacquiao with Romy Lagmay Oriel **2.** Ricardo Echevarria with Oscar De La Hoya **3.** Travis Preston with Sergio Martinez **4.** Mikey Garcia with David Lopez at Rios vs. Antillon fight at the Home Depot Center, Carson, CA **5.** Ken Dobiecki with Carlos Molina **6.** Former heavy weight contender Joe "King" Roman with former light weight amature and boxing writer Arturo S. Rubero **7.** Wayne and Carl Smith with Fernando Vargas **8.** John Dolutan with Brian Viloria "The Hawaiian Punch" Mandalay Bay hotel Las Vegas **9.** Sunil Monteiro and George Foreman at the Haye vs. Klitschko fight in Hamburg. **10.** Joe and Vincent Sirianni with Roberto Duran **11.** Aaron Attwood and Gregg Rust with Floyd Mayweather **12.** Frankie Trendley with Bernard Hopkins at Friday Night Fights in Saint Charles, MO **13.** Jose, Jessica and Alyssa Avila with Abner Mares in Pomona, CA **14.** Jamal Wynn with Tommy Hearns at the Fantasy Springs Resort Casino Indio, CA

ELENA DIAZ

IMAGES: IAN TAKAHASHI

Elena Diaz

Height: 5 feet, 5 inches
Weight: 110 pounds
Measurements: 34 - 24 - 34
Stance: Orthodox
Reach: 28 inches
Favorite Boxer: Manny Pacquiao and James Braddock
Birthplace: El Salvador
Current Home: West Hollywood, Calif.
Where you've seen her: *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia* (FX), *The Green Hornet* (Columbia Pictures), *Manswers* (Spike), *A Que No Puedes* (Estrella TV)

ELENA DIAZ
DO YOU WANT TO BE A RING CARD GIRL OF THE MONTH?
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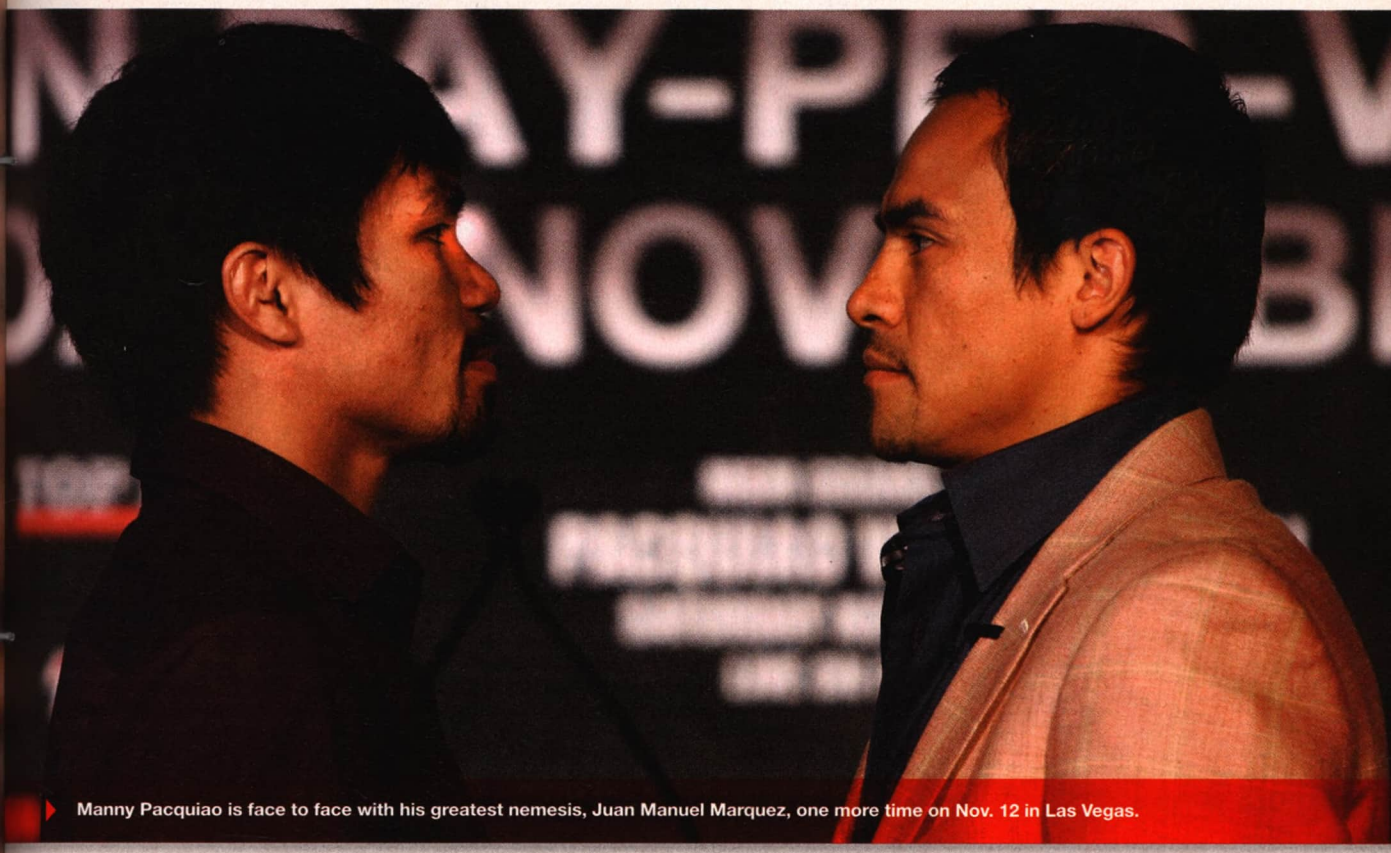


Manny Pacquiao is face to face with his greatest nemesis, Juan Manuel Marquez, one more time on Nov. 12 in Las Vegas.

THE KNIGHT VS. THE DRAGON

MANNY PACQUIAO, THE HERO IN OUR STORY, ENCOUNTERS THE BEAST ONE MORE TIME

WORDS: **DON STRADLEY** / IMAGES: **CHRIS FARINA / TOP RANK / ROBERT JAMES HUGHES / FIGHTWIREIMAGES**

The massive media tour taken by Manny Pacquiao and Juan Manuel Marquez to promote their upcoming bout, a junket that brought them from the Philippines to New York to Los Angeles and finally to Mexico City, felt less like the buildup for a welterweight fight than a red carpet event to promote a new movie or a CD release. The showbiz feel culminated when they appeared on *La Academia*, a popular TV Azteca program, to sing together. As they tackled such karaoke favorites as "Imagine," "Cielito Lindo" and "La Bamba," the message seemed to be that this promotion was a classy affair between two gentlemen who respect each other. There would be no trashy behavior, just singing and smiles all around. They seemed to enjoy themselves, Pacquiao in particular; his vocal chops were that of the dedicated amateur while Marquez was all bravado and off-key bellowing. But as the confetti fluttered down and the Mexican studio audience squealed, one wondered what Pacquiao and Marquez really think of this impending battle, their third in seven years.

Marquez may simply be happy for the opportunity. The bout, scheduled for Nov. 12 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, is likely to be his last serious payday. Twice he has put Pacquiao through punishing marathons, and at times it seemed a third bout would never happen. If Pacquiao's camp had sought other opponents, the fight game would've moved on without blinking. Marquez, as talented as he is, doesn't grab headlines.

WE IMAGINE PACQUIAO LOOKS TO THIS NEXT BOUT WITH THANKFULNESS FOR **MARQUEZ HAS BEEN THE STONE UPON WHICH PACQUIAO SHARPENS HIMSELF.**

As for Pacquiao, one never knows what is on in his mind any more than one knows what goes on in the mind of a trained

The media tour to promote the fight – including here in Mexico City – was a love fest but Pacquiao relishes the opportunity to finally settle things with Marquez.

tiger. Pacquiao's fame has become so comically outsized in the Philippines (somewhere between 60,000 and 75,000 turned out for the Manila stop of the promotional tour), and his goals have grown so lofty (he dreams of using his political clout to end poverty and corruption in the Philippines) that we have to go back to mid-1970s Muhammad Ali to find a reasonable comparison. But it was through boxing that Pacquiao became this sort of universal man of the people, so we imagine Pacquiao looks to this next bout with thankfulness, for Marquez has been the stone upon which Pacquiao sharpens himself.

Their first bout was a magnificent, bloody spectacle, with Pacquiao pounding Marquez to the canvas three times in the opening round only to find himself outdueled for the remainder of the fight. The judges called it a draw. Their second bout, a split verdict for Pacquiao, was a less-frenzied replay of the first, with Marquez dropped early, yet again keeping things close. But while each bout was highly dramatic, it was their aftermaths that illustrate the unique place Marquez holds in Pacquiao's career. Every time they meet, Pacquiao emerges from the rubble a better, stronger fighter.

After the first bout in 2004, Pacquiao improved to the point where he won two out of three over the legendary Erik Morales, proving there was more than we'd thought to this brawling Filipino kid. After Pacquiao-Marquez II in 2008, Pacquiao enjoyed the most remarkable run of his career, drawing comparisons to greats of the past. (The late Bill Gallo, who saw his share of fighters during his decades at the New York Daily News, praised Pacquiao as "the closest thing I've seen to Sugar Ray Robinson.") Maybe it's just that Marquez is so skilled that other opponents seemed easier. Or it could be that Pacquiao left those Marquez bouts seeking new elements for his arsenal. Or maybe something mystical happens, as if the greatness in Marquez transfers to Pacquiao.

Yes, mystical. That might be it.

At times, Pacquiao's career has seemed plucked from Joseph

THEIR FIRST BOUT WAS A MAGNIFICENT, **BLOODY SPECTACLE, WITH PACQUIAO POUNDING MARQUEZ TO THE CANVAS THREE TIMES IN THE OPENING ROUND** ONLY TO FIND HIMSELF OUTDUELED FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE FIGHT.

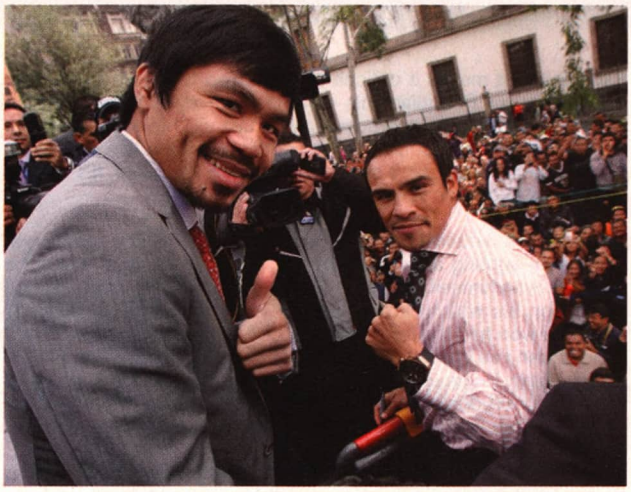
A part of Freddie Roach, Pacquiao's mentor, worries that Marquez might have his fighter's number but his confidence supersedes any doubts.

Campbell's study of mythology, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, a book which has influenced everything from *Star Wars* to the Harry Potter series. Campbell described how all heroic quests take place along the same route, from the initial call to adventure, to the journey, to the people one meets along the way, to the lessons learned, to the return home where the hero's bounty is shared. In Pacquiao's version, his call was when he embarked on a boxing career, his journey took him from General Santos City to America. The people he met included Freddie Roach and Bob Arum, his lessons involved honing his raw style. In true heroic fashion, he returned to the Philippines as a national icon and is now a congressman dedicated to helping the poor. Pacquiao is this era's most notable fighter not only because he is the most fun to watch, but also because his story is the most fun to tell.

Believing that Marquez is past his prime, Las Vegas oddsmakers installed Pacquiao as an 8-1 favorite. It's true that 38-year-old Marquez seems to take more punishment than he once did, but there are too many questions to make the bout an easy call. Could Marquez, as many believe, have Pacquiao's number? Or could Pacquiao, in his haste to rip out the tongues of his critics, be too eager for a knockout win and make a costly mistake?

Will the judges, who gave Marquez short shrift for his counter punches in the first two bouts, pay closer attention to him this time and award him the close rounds?

And have the changes that have taken place in Pacquiao's life changed him as a fighter? There was a revealing moment in Pacquiao's recent bout with Shane Mosley. It occurred just after he'd been shoved to the canvas in the 10th. Angry that the push had been ruled a knockdown, Pacquiao scowled and banged his gloves together. But as Pacquiao pursued the backtracking Mosley, he appeared to be out of practice, unable to lay any hurt on his opponent. In the fight before that, a benevolent Pacquiao allowed the battered Antonio Margarito to finish on his feet. This isn't to suggest Pacquiao has grown fat and sassy with fame. It's more like he has so



fully embraced his role as the God-fearing savior of the Philippines, that he has lost some of the street-dog mentality that had made him so dangerous in the ring. Maybe boxing seems distasteful to him now, after dining with dignitaries and Catholic bishops.

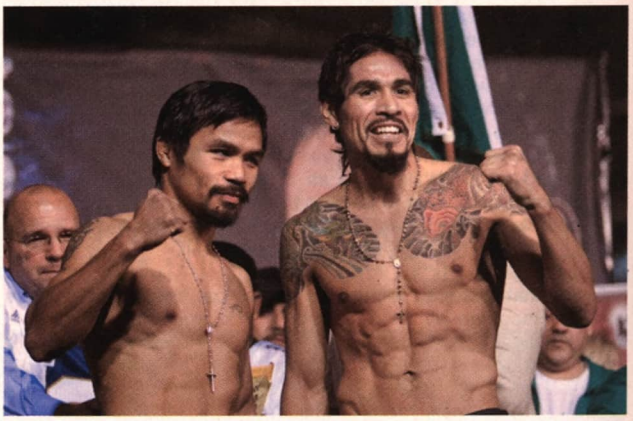
But even if Pacquiao has changed, he knows he can't be less than his best against Marquez. Pacquiao said during the promo tour, "I really need to prove it this time, and each of us will need to accept who's the winner, who's the loser. This fight is very important because this will clear all doubts. Marquez claimed he won the two fights, I simply won't let that happen (again)."

But the truth is that Pacquiao and Marquez could fight 10 times, and each fight would be close. Marquez has a way of reading

Is Pacquiao's inability to finish off wounded prey Shane Mosley (shown here) and Antonio Margarito a sign that he has lost his street-dog mentality?

Pacquiao that makes it difficult for Pacquiao to do his best work. Fortunately for Pacquiao, his style is more eye-catching, which translates well on the scorecards. Marquez will have his moments in November, but Pacquiao will probably pull out a win on points. It's not that Marquez isn't capable of beating Pacquiao, it's that he is merely a supporting player in a much bigger story.

Much will be written about Marquez, still *THE RING*'s lightweight champion, fighting as a welterweight, a weight class at which he hasn't proven himself. And many will claim mismanagement tripped him up on his way to a third bout with Pacquiao, suggesting he would've won had the bout taken place a few years ago. But those factors aren't as important as the fact that this has been Pacquiao's tale all along. Pacquiao is the knight cutting through the forest, and Marquez is a rugged old dragon from his past, standing in his way one more time, readying him for whatever dark crusades lie ahead.



The timing of the bout is perfect, for the great celestial author who seems to plot Pacquiao's every move has brought Marquez back just when Pacquiao needs a serious challenge. After the inert Josh Clottey, the lumbering Margarito and the unwilling Mosley, Pacquiao is at risk of stagnation. He needs to feel the cold hard smack of leather again, before his mind is too clouded with debates about health bills. "The biggest fight in my life is not in boxing," Pacquiao said last May. "The biggest fight in my life is to end poverty in my country." First, though, Pacquiao must dip into the fire of Marquez. It's a hell of a way to get refocused, but a hero's journey is never easy. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to ***THE RING.***

Juan Manuel Marquez and Manny Pacquiao fought to a draw in 2004.

PACQUIAO-MARQUEZ I AND II: A LOOK BACK

THE PRINCIPALS EVOLVED BETWEEN THEIR MEMORABLE MEETINGS IN 2004 AND 2008

WORDS: **DOUG FISCHER** / IMAGES: **NAOKI FUKUDA**

The story of the first two fights between Manny Pacquiao and Juan Manuel Marquez is one of change.

Both fighters evolved during the near four-year span between their initial featherweight encounter and their junior lightweight rematch, and their metamorphosis involved more than just gaining four pounds.

Their fighting styles and ring identities changed out of necessity.

Pacquiao evolved from a one-handed ring assassin to a versatile boxer-puncher. The difficult time Marquez gave him in their first bout and his subsequent decision loss to Erik Morales nine months later forced Pacquiao to recognize that he had to improve his skills and technique if he wanted to compete at the elite level of the sport.

Marquez willingly "devolved," so to speak, from a calculating counter puncher to an aggressive combination-punching technician for similar reasons but completely different circumstances.

Marquez already possessed the skill and ring generalship to compete with the best fighters of the 126- and 130-pound divisions, but his careful style of boxing was not appreciated by the fans. Sometimes it wasn't appreciated by the judges.

The epiphany for change struck Pacquiao and Marquez after their first fight, which took place on May 8, 2004 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

During the fight, which ended in a controversial split draw, both fighters displayed the talent that made them the two best

Juan Manuel Marquez went down three times in the first round yet earned a draw in his first fight with Manny Pacquiao.

"MARQUEZ IS MAKING THE STAND OF HIS LIFE BECAUSE **THIS IS THE FIGHT OF HIS LIFE.**"

– HBO COMMENTATOR LARRY MERCHANT

featherweights on the planet. Pacquiao exploded with phenomenal speed and power backed by a frenetic fighting pace. Marquez exhibited his usual cool counter punching, underrated tenacity and an uncanny ability to adjust to his adversary's ferocious style.

Pacquiao, a burgeoning Filipino hero at the time thanks to his dominating 11th-round stoppage of Marco Antonio Barrera in his previous fight, struck like a bolt of lighting midway through the opening round, dropping Marquez to the seat of his pants with a straight left.

Seemingly unhurt, Marquez got up and immediately returned fire. However, a furious follow-up one-two combination knocked Marquez on his back so hard the Mexico City native's feet flew up in the air. This time Marquez, who got up with blood streaming out of both nostrils, was hurt.

With 54 seconds left in the round, Pacquiao went about the business of finishing off his wounded prey, first maneuvering Marquez near the ropes and then nearly blasting the backpedaling titleholder through them as yet another left cross sent the Mexican to the canvas.

Most thought the fight was over as Marquez lay on his back with his gloves covering his face, but for the third time in the round he bravely climbed to his feet by referee Joe Cortez's count of eight. Pacquiao attacked like a 126-pound Mike Tyson but could not finish Marquez.

Most figured the knockout would come sometime during the second the round, but that's when Marquez put his talents – mainly the ability to adjust – on display.

The technician began the round stepping to his left, away from Pacquiao's powerful left cross. He also began parrying Pacquiao's jab with his left hand, forcing the impetuous southpaw to sometimes lead with his left, which made him easier to counter.

Marquez doubled his left hook to the body and head whenever Pacquaio lunged within range. He countered with his straight right every time Pacquiao loaded up and missed with his big left.

HBO commentator Larry Merchant, who called the live broadcast in the U.S., stated during the second round: "Marquez is making the stand of his life because this is the fight of his life."

Indeed, by the final minute of the round, the beast almost seemed tamed as the pace of the fight slowed down. Pacquiao was having second thoughts about charging forward.

Marquez gave Pacquiao more to think about during the next two rounds, including straight rights to the body, which encouraged a healthy distance between the two, and feints that caused the speed demon to jump back on his heels or fire punches out of time.

By the middle rounds of the bout, Marquez was beating Pacquiao to the punch with his jab and right hand and outworking the befuddled Filipino on the inside. Pacquiao staged a spirited late-rounds rally but it was only enough to salvage a draw in a fight he nearly won by first-round knockout.

After the fight, amid the controversy of how one of the judges scored the first round, two story lines developed among hardcore fans: Perhaps Pacquiao wasn't as good as advertised, as evidenced by his technical limitations, and maybe Marquez had the warrior's

Juan Manuel Marquez was every effective against Manny Pacquiao from the second round on in 2004.

heart that countrymen Barrera and Morales were better known for.

Pacquiao wanted to prove the boxing world wrong. Marquez wanted to prove them right. However, it would take years and a few fights before either fighter did so.

Marquez had to endure some criticism after his next two fights – safety-first decision victories over Orlando Salido and Victor Polo – before his career hit an all-time low with an ill-advised trip to Indonesia that resulted in a controversial decision loss to Chris John.

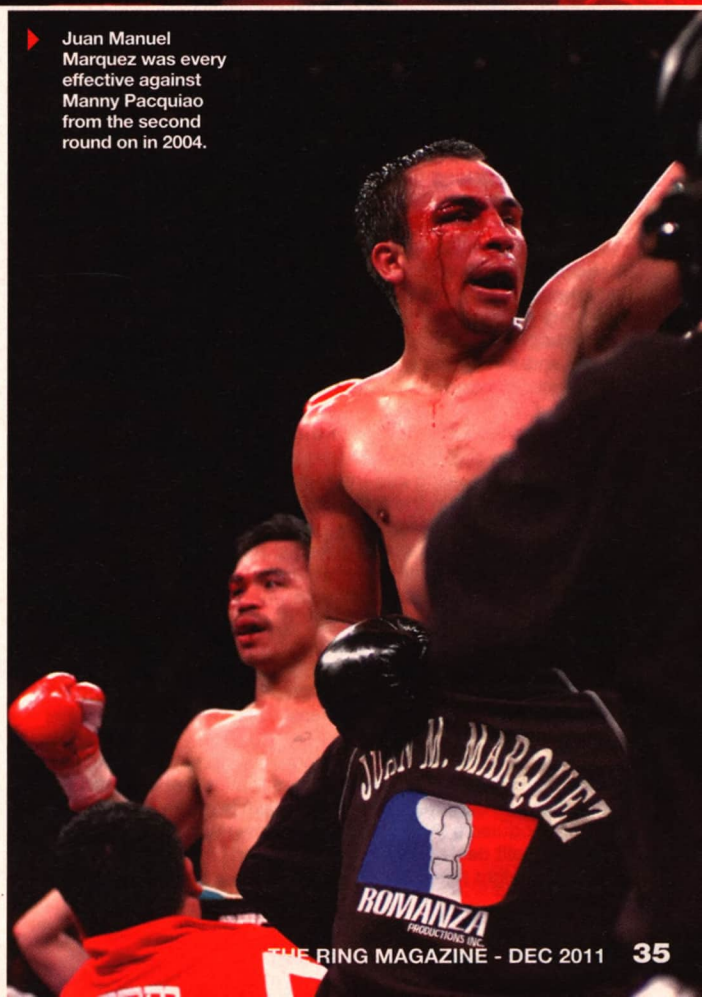
Being called boring stung Marquez's pride, but losing to a fighter he thought he beat hurt deep enough to awaken something inside his spirit. Marquez became a different fighter in his next two bouts, brutally thrilling stoppages of Terdsak Kokietgym (AKA Jandaeng) and Jimrex Jaca. His careful nature was replaced by a relentless, take-no-prisoners attitude, which was welcomed by fans.

Marquez's newfound aggression did more than dash criticism and make him a must-see TV fighter; it helped him outpoint Barrera in March 2007, arguably the best win of his career. The victory, which earned Marquez the WBC 130-pound title, helped set the stage for the rematch with Pacquiao.

However, when the two met again on March 15, 2008 in Las Vegas, Marquez did not face the same Pacquiao he fought in '04. Pacquiao, whose status among Filipinos had grown to iconic levels during his trilogy with Morales, had transformed into a more mature and complete fighter.

A consistent jab and right hook was added to his straight left. His balance was improved. Lateral movement was developed. Freddie Roach, who had trained Pacquiao since 2001, was embarrassed by his fighter's inability to adjust in the middle rounds of his first bouts with Marquez and Morales.

Juan Manuel Marquez was every effective against Manny Pacquiao from the second round on in 2004.



Manny Pacquiao had reason to celebrate after his second meeting with Juan Manuel Marquez, in 2008.

"It was more my fault than Manny's," Roach recently told RingTV.com. "I was satisfied with him knocking everybody out with his left. After the Morales loss, I made it my mission to make his right hand just as dangerous.

"It took about a year to bring it out. You can see the improvement during the three fights with Morales. He always had the right hand but he didn't have the confidence to use it during a fight."

Between the three bouts with Morales, Roach purposely held Pacquiao's natural aggression back in stay-busy bouts against Hector Velazquez and Oscar Larios, hoping to instill a sense of patience in his star pupil.

The master trainer was successful to a large degree. A controlled, two-handed version of Pacquiao confronted Marquez in their anticipated rematch. Pacquiao didn't jump into attack mode at the sound of the opening bell. Instead, he doubled his jab and waited for the right moments to drop his vaunted left hand.

Marquez let Pacquiao know that he had changed as well, by backing the Filipino star to the ropes with a hard right hand and body-head combination. Marquez was still a counter puncher at heart, but he was more willing take the offensive lead. His aggressive attitude was rewarded at the end of the second round when a lunging hook caught and momentarily staggered Pacquiao in the final seconds of the second round.

Pacquiao waited until the end of the third round to return the favor with a left cross that knocked Marquez flat on his back. And though he had Marquez reeling into the ropes just before the bell, he didn't try to finish his rival in the fourth round.

Marquez's new willingness to take risks prevented Pacquiao from stepping up the pace and overwhelming him as he had so many opponents. However, Marquez was unable to outclass Pacquiao the way he had in their fight bout.

The more patient Pacquiao made fewer mistakes for Marquez to capitalize on. His busy jab and improved footwork allowed him to box on almost even terms with Marquez.

So instead of a shootout or a boxing clinic, fans were treated to an evenly contested, high-intensity chess match that featured heated exchanges throughout. After 12 fast-paced, crowd-pleasing rounds, Pacquiao's third-round knockdown was the difference in a very close split decision victory that earned him THE RING's vacant junior lightweight title. ■

Marquez thought he did enough to win the rematch but was disappointed.

The first two Manny Pacquiao-Juan Manuel Marquez fights couldn't have been much closer. Pacquiao has a one-point lead in overall points.

WHO WOULD'VE FIGURED?

THE NUMBERS **PAINT AN INTERESTING PICTURE** OF PACQUIAO-MARQUEZ I AND II

WORDS: **LEE GROVES** / IMAGE: **NAOKI FUKUDA**

Few matchups in boxing history have ever been more competitive than Manny Pacquiao vs. Juan Manuel Marquez. Pacquiao's blazing brilliance and Marquez's polished pugnacity produced a pair of classics. But like many masterpieces in the art world, no one could agree on which elements were better. Pacquiao's supporters point to his bolder colors highlighted by four knockdowns while Marquez's backers cite his subtle shadings, longer stretches of dominance and technical superiority.

When artistic interpretation fails, raw numbers can help tip the scales. But here they only amplify the debate. **Consider:**

- Thanks to Tom Miller's 114-113 scorecard in fight two, Pacquiao holds a 679-678 points lead.

- Despite the draw in the first fight, Marquez out-landed Pacquiao 158-148 overall and 122-100 in power shots, according to CompuBox. He also was more accurate overall (29 percent to 23 percent) and in jabs (17 percent to 12 percent), but – perhaps pivotally – Pacquiao landed 43 percent of his power punches to Marquez's 36 percent. Also, Pacquiao's superior activity (639-547 total punches and 408-208 attempted jabs) may have given him the benefit of the doubt in close rounds. Paradoxically, the slugging Pacquiao landed more jabs (48-36) and the scientific Marquez tried more power shots (339-231).

- The same patterns emerged in the rematch: Marquez landed more total punches (172-157) and power shots (130-114), plus landed at a higher rate (34 percent to 25 percent overall, 21 percent to 14 percent jabs and 42 percent to 37 percent power shots). Pacquiao was more active (619-511 total punches, averaging nine more per round), plus he prevailed in thrown and landed jabs (314-201 and 43-42, respectively) while Marquez attempted more power punches (310-305). And for a second time, the result of the fight was determined by Pacquiao's ability to drop Marquez (once in round three). Otherwise, there would have been a second draw.

- In two fights, Marquez leads Pacquiao 330-305 in total connects, 649-536 in power attempts and 252-214 in power connects but trails Pacquiao in punches thrown (1,258-1,058), attempted jabs (722-409) and jab connects (91-78).

The round-by-round breakdowns revealed several fascinating facts:

- Despite suffering three first-round knockdowns in the first fight, Marquez landed more punches (13-11) and trailed just 11-10 in power connects.

- In fight one, Marquez led 7-3-2 in overall punches and 8-3-1 in power connects while Pacquiao prevailed 6-5-1 in connected jabs. In 36 possible categories, Marquez led 16-12-8.

- In the rematch, Pacquiao led 6-5-1 in overall punches and 8-4 in landed jabs but trailed 6-5-1 in power connects. Still, Pacquiao enjoyed a 19-15-2 edge.

- When one combines the round-by-round totals, they enter fight three all even – 31-31-10.

Then again, didn't we know that all along?

COMPUBOX STATS

MANNY PACQUIAO VS. JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ
MAY 8, 2004, LAS VEGAS **RESULT:** DRAW (115-110, 113-113, 115-110)

TOTAL PUNCHES LANDED / THROWN

ROUND	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
MARQUEZ	13/40 32%	8/45 18%	12/45 27%	12/43 28%	16/42 38%	16/41 39%	16/43 37%	11/38 29%	16/50 32%	12/53 23%	15/53 28%	11/54 20%
PACQUIAO	11/73 15%	18/77 23%	9/57 16%	12/47 26%	9/49 18%	5/35 14%	19/51 37%	8/43 19%	15/52 29%	18/49 37%	13/43 30%	11/63 17%

JABS LANDED / THROWN

ROUND	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
MARQUEZ	3/16 19%	1/13 8%	1/15 7%	3/20 15%	2/13 15%	3/12 25%	2/13 15%	3/15 20%	6/17 35%	3/20 15%	5/25 20%	4/29 14%
PACQUIAO	0/42 0%	4/50 8%	1/40 2%	4/28 14%	3/37 8%	4/26 15%	6/31 19%	3/27 11%	6/29 21%	8/32 25%	5/24 21%	4/42 10%

POWER PUNCHES LANDED / THROWN

ROUND	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
MARQUEZ	10/24 42%	7/32 22%	11/30 37%	9/23 39%	14/29 48%	13/29 45%	14/30 47%	8/23 35%	10/33 30%	9/33 27%	10/28 36%	7/25 28%
PACQUIAO	11/31 35%	14/27 52%	8/17 47%	8/19 42%	6/12 50%	1/9 11%	13/20 65%	5/16 31%	9/23 39%	10/17 59%	8/19 42%	7/21 33%

FINAL PUNCHSTAT REPORT
PUNCHES LANDED / THROWN

	TOTAL PUNCHES	JABS	POWER PUNCHES
MARQUEZ	158 / 547 29%	36 / 208 17%	122 / 339 36%
PACQUIAO	148 / 639 23%	48 / 408 12%	100 / 231 43%

COMPUBOX STATS

MANNY PACQUIAO VS. JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ MARCH 15, 2008, LAS VEGAS
RESULT: PACQUIAO BY SPLIT DECISION (115-112, 112-115, 114-113)

TOTAL PUNCHES LANDED / THROWN

ROUND	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
MARQUEZ	6/43 14%	18/45 40%	13/35 37%	14/38 37%	12/38 32%	15/40 38%	15/49 31%	21/46 46%	12/37 32%	15/44 34%	12/47 26%	19/49 39%
PACQUIAO	12/49 24%	9/60 15%	13/51 25%	19/60 32%	10/40 25%	16/54 30%	12/54 22%	5/25 20%	13/41 32%	17/64 27%	16/55 29%	15/66 23%

JABS LANDED / THROWN

ROUND	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
MARQUEZ	2/24 8%	6/19 32%	6/18 33%	5/16 31%	2/15 13%	1/10 10%	3/14 21%	6/13 46%	3/19 16%	2/17 12%	2/21 10%	4/15 27%
PACQUIAO	4/26 15%	0/32 0%	4/25 16%	6/34 18%	6/28 21%	3/26 12%	4/28 14%	0/10 0%	2/17 12%	4/30 13%	5/29 17%	5/29 17%

POWER PUNCHES LANDED / THROWN

ROUND	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
MARQUEZ	4/19 21%	12/26 46%	7/17 41%	9/22 41%	10/23 43%	14/30 47%	12/35 34%	15/33 45%	9/18 50%	13/27 48%	10/26 38%	15/34 44%
PACQUIAO	8/23 35%	9/28 32%	9/26 35%	13/26 50%	4/12 33%	13/28 46%	8/26 31%	5/15 33%	11/24 46%	13/34 38%	11/26 42%	10/37 27%

FINAL PUNCHSTAT REPORT
PUNCHES LANDED / THROWN

	TOTAL PUNCHES	JABS	POWER PUNCHES
MARQUEZ	172 / 511 34%	42 / 201 21%	130 / 310 42%
PACQUIAO	157 / 619 25%	43 / 314 14%	114 / 305 37%

Erik Morales was competitive in two fights with Manny Pacquiao but took a beating from a new-and-improved version of the Filipino dynamo in their third meeting.

'VERY EASY FIGHT FOR PACQUIAO'

ERIK MORALES KNOWS FIRSTHAND THAT A THIRD MEETING WITH THE FILIPINO CAN BE A NIGHTMARE

WORDS: **NORM FRAUENHEIM** IMAGES: **CHRIS COZZONE-FIGHTWIREIMAGES / GABRIEL BOUYS / GETTY IMAGES**

Only Erik Morales has faced Manny Pacquiao three times. Juan Manuel Marquez is about to be the second on Nov. 12 in his stubborn quest to prove he was right, the judges were wrong and that he is a better fighter than the Filipino Congressman. In the third chapter, there is a chance for Marquez to write the defining summation, to add the final punctuation.

But trilogies, like history and personalities, don't always repeat themselves in the same sequence, style or substance. They can change, be as different as, say, the Pacquiao of 2005 and the one of today. Still, an already-complete trilogy can provide a template, a guide for what might happen in one that is entering its final chapter.

Morales remembers his devastating loss, a third-round stoppage, in the November 2006 rubber match of his triple against Pacquiao, and sees a similar fate for Marquez. But a Marquez victory, which would end Mexico's long run of futility against Pacquiao, would make him happy.

"MARQUEZ HAS NO SPEED AND IS MUCH BEATEN, SO IT WILL BE A VERY EASY FIGHT FOR PACQUIAO,"
– ERIK MORALES

"I would like that Marquez win," Morales told a Golden Boy Promotions spokesman while training in Marquez's hometown, Mexico City, for his Sept. 17 bout against Pablo Cesar Cano on the Victor Ortiz-Floyd Mayweather Jr. card.

To pick Marquez, however, would be cheating, Morales said.

"Marquez has no speed and is much beaten, so it will be a very easy fight for Pacquiao," Morales said. "Perhaps it will be competitive for just four rounds because of Marquez's knowledge. But that's it.
"I believe it will be the last fight for Marquez because he will retire after the fight is over."

Morales is the last fighter to beat Pacquiao, then a super-featherweight, in March 2005 by a unanimous decision in a bout noteworthy for a bad cut above one eye that troubled the Filipino, as well as Morales' decision to make a dangerous switch to southpaw and brawl in the 12th round. Morales closed the fight that night with showmanship that seemed to say he would always get the best of Pacquiao.

What Morales didn't know then and painfully discovered in the subsequent rematches is that Pacquiao did get better – a lot better.

"Yes," said Morales, who in a January 2006

Manny Pacquiao found a right hand – and Erik Morales' face – in the third fight between them, which ended with Morales on his pants in the third round.

rematch ran into a more-effective right hand on his way to losing a 10th round stoppage.

Under trainer Freddie Roach's tutelage, Pacquiao was transformed into a two-handed puncher. In the first Morales fight, he relied on his left hand, dangerous yet limited. In the second fight, the skilled Morales suddenly experienced a right that had not been there a mere 10 months ago.

Morales, knocked down twice in the 10th, recalls a right thrown with more precision and intent – a weapon instead of an appendage. Morales also detected more patience in Pacquiao's tactics.

"I did notice he doesn't get crazy when he attacks," Morales said of a moment when the Filipino began to evolve and move away from a nickname, Pacman, taken from a 30-year-old computer game that personified an entertaining, yet wildly-erratic way of fighting.

In the trilogy's finale, Morales simply had no chance. In the third round of the third bout in November 2006, Morales was down, with his back to the ropes. His father, then his trainer, urged him to get up and continue the fight. But Morales, known for his toughness, waved a gloved hand at his dad, gesturing *no mas*. Then, he sat on his stool, speechless for about five minutes. In his vacant eyes, there was the look of somebody who had just been trampled by momentum as unstoppable as it was unanticipated.

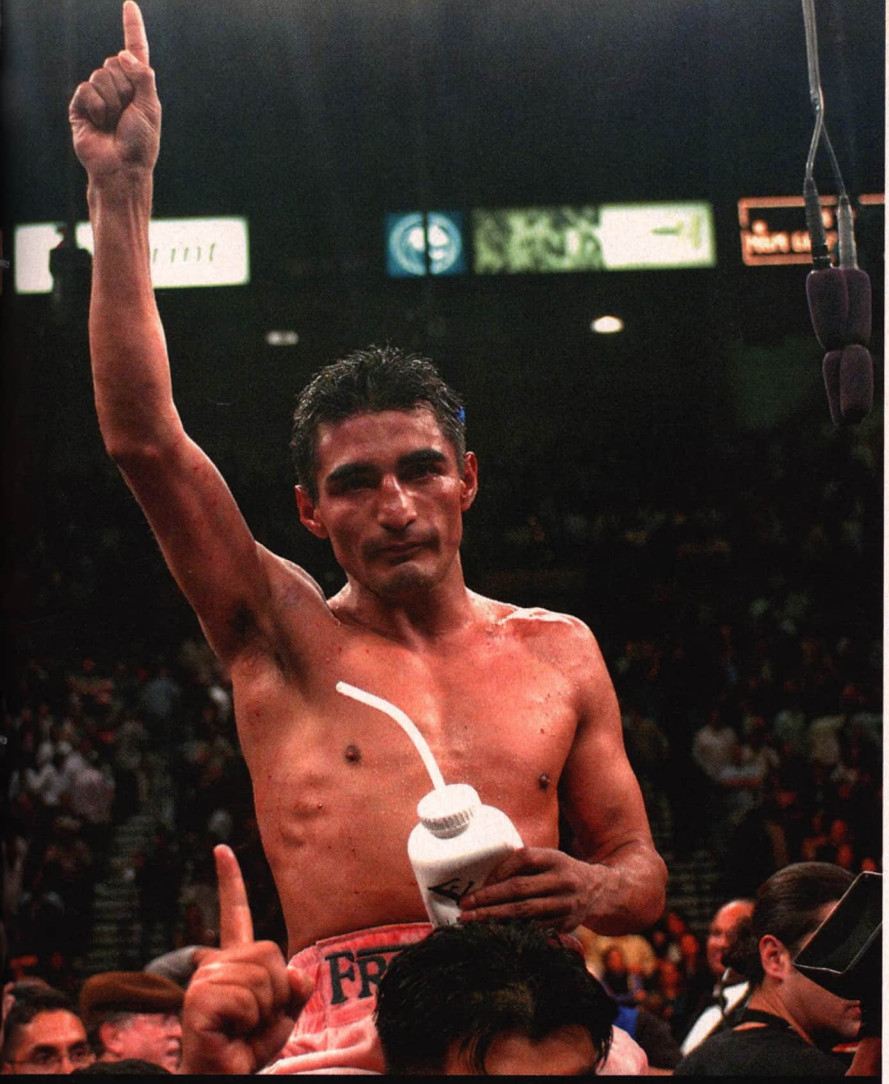
In 2008, there was that same look in Oscar De La Hoya's eyes after losing an eight-round stoppage to Pacquiao. In May, there it was again, this time in Shane Mosley's eyes after Pacquiao won by unanimous decision. There has been a path, an arc of stunning improvement in Pacquiao from weight to weight. Yet it was during his super-featherweight trilogy with Morales that it became dramatically evident. Make no mistake, though, the basics are the same.

"In general, [he] is the same fighter...just with speed and throwing blows," Morales said.

But also don't make the mistake of stripping away all the elements that Pacquiao has added in his evolution. Yeah, he used to be Pacman. But comparing the 2005 Pacquiao to the fighter of today is a little bit like comparing the outdated game to the HP TouchPad he now endorses. It doesn't work. One was fun and one-dimensional; the other is sophisticated and versatile.

In terms of style, there is the time-tested argument that Marquez, perhaps uniquely, has the right one to counter Pacquiao. That helps explain how he got up from a quick succession of knockdowns and fought Pacquiao to a draw in 2004. Controversy over Marquez's loss in a 2008 rematch also might be explained by style. Pacquiao won a split-decision. But Marquez did enough to convince one judge and many at ringside that he had done enough to win.

Marquez's tactical instincts are as quick as any in his generation. He knows how and when to adjust. In the first two fights, at least, he was more adept at offsetting Pacquiao's southpaw advantages than just about anybody other than perhaps



Erik Morales is the last fighter to beat Manny Pacquiao, winning a unanimous decision in 2005.

Morales. In fighting a southpaw, the first commandment for an opponent in a conventional stance is to keep the lead foot outside of the left-hander's lead foot. It's a rule Marquez forgot in the opening round of the first fight. He was floored three times before he adjusted and fought Pacquiao on even terms for the next 11 rounds.

Through 11 rounds of his first fight with Pacquiao, Morales also remembered that fundamental, which kept Pacquiao from moving to his right, where he has been at his powerful best. But the angles and moves have multiplied since then. And that multiplication could produce even more new wrinkles, many more angles. Expect them, Morales says.

"I think so," Morales said when asked whether Pacquiao's path of improvement will continue.

Former lightweight titleholder David Diaz agrees, having fought both Morales and Pacquiao. In 2007, Diaz beat a declining Morales in his first bout after the trilogy with Pacquiao. Later in 2008, Diaz lost a ninth-round stoppage to Pacquiao that was significant because it served as a test as to whether the Filipino could move up in weight and money. After dominating the junior lightweights (130 pounds), Pacquiao moved to 135. He didn't stay for long. After Diaz, it was straight to junior weltreweigtr (140) and then welterweight (147).

"When I fought him, his punch ratio was up from what I had seen from him," Diaz said. "His right hand was also more centered, a lot more on target. He also has all of these angles, which are even more difficult to figure out because he's a left-hander. His speed and power have given all of us trouble. Both have improved. Usually, you lose a little power if you get faster or lose a little speed if you add power. But he just gets better with both.

"I just don't know if Marquez can counter that. I think it could be very tough for him." ■

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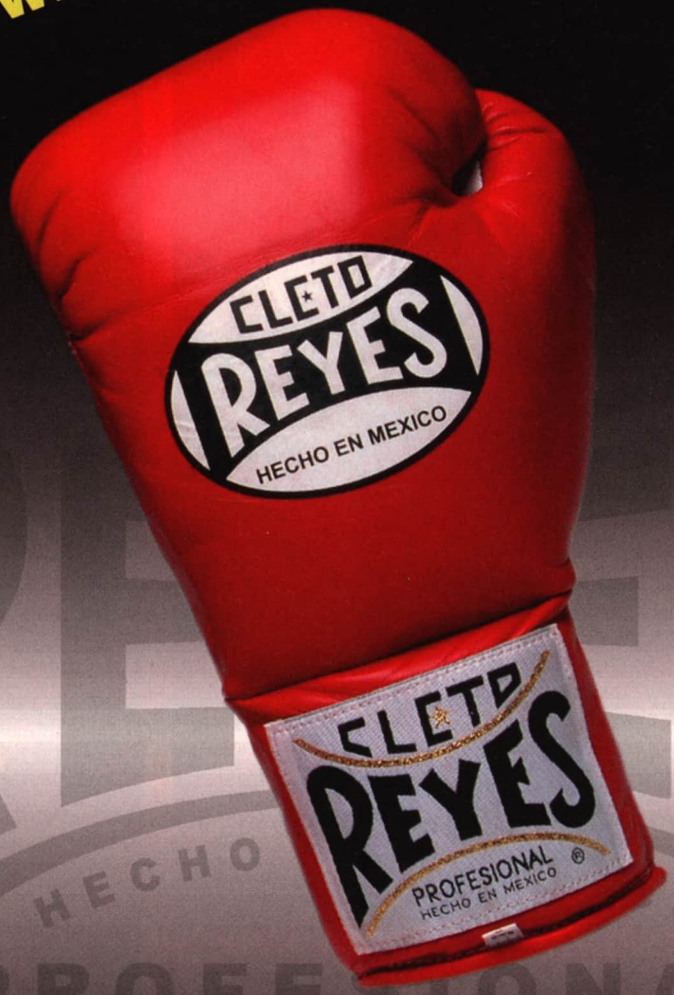

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Manny Pacquiao was humbled by the warm reception he received recently in Mexico City.

THE RELUCTANT MEXICUTIONER

MANNY PACQUIAO HAS DOMINATED OPPONENTS OF MEXICAN HERITAGE, EARNING RESPECT SOUTH OF THE BORDER

WORDS: **MICHAEL ROSENTHAL** / IMAGE: **CHRIS FARINA / TOP RANK**

Manny Pacquiao, a congenial conqueror of men, hates being called "The Mexicutioner." It's an apt moniker, though.

The Filipino superstar's record against Mexicans or Mexican-Americans stands at 13-1-1, including nine knockouts. And not one of his opponents was considered a pushover going into their fight.

In fact, four of them – Marco Antonio Barrera, Erik Morales, Juan Manuel Marquez and Oscar De La Hoya – are future Hall of Famers. Pacquiao is 6-1-1 against this fearsome foursome. Only Morales was able to prevail, scoring a close but unanimous decision in 2005 that remains Pacquiao's most-recent loss. Marquez drew with Pacquiao in 2004 in the first of their two previous fights.

Making the case even stronger, almost all of Pacquiao's 15 fights against Mexicans – more than a quarter of his pro fights – were one-sided.

Pacquiao started his run against Mexicans in 1999 with a four-round knockout of Gabriel Mira in defense of his WBC flyweight title in Manila. Four years later, in Los Angeles, he stopped Emanuel Lucero in three rounds to retain his IBF junior featherweight title.

Then came the big guns. Immediately after the Lucero fight, he dominated Barrera en route to an 11th-round knockout in San Antonio. Pacquiao then knocked Marquez down three times in the first round of their initial bout but had to settle for a draw in Las Vegas. Two fights later, he lost to Morales.

The only Mexican to give him trouble after that was Marquez in 2008, when Pacquiao won a controversial split decision. Other than that, Pacquiao dominated (in order): Hector Velazquez (TKO 6), Morales (TKO 10), Oscar Larios (UD 12), Morales (KO 3), Jorge Solis (KO 8), Barrera (UD 12), Diaz (TKO 9), De La Hoya (TKO 8) and Antonio Margarito (UD 12).

The oddsmakers say that Pacquiao will run his record to 14-1-1 against Mexicans when he faces Marquez for a third time on Nov. 12 in Las Vegas, further cementing his dominance over a proud group of fighters.

The Mexican fans don't seem to hold it against him, though. Pacquiao and Marquez recently traveled to Mexico City to promote their upcoming fight and a reported 30,000 fans showed up, the vast majority of whom greeted Pacquiao warmly.

"I am very surprised and very happy about this reception," Pacquiao told examiner.com.

He shouldn't be surprised. The Mexicans appreciate a great fighter, particularly one as humble as Pacquiao. Even if he does beat up on their own. ■

PACQUIAO vs. MEXICANS

TKO 4	Gabriel Mira April 24, 1999	Manila
TKO 3	Emanuel Lucero July 26, 2003	Los Angeles
TKO 11	Marco Antonio Barrera Nov. 15, 2003	San Antonio
D 12	Juan Manuel Marquez May 8, 2004	Las Vegas
L 12	Erik Morales March 19, 2005	Las Vegas
TKO 6	Hector Velasquez Sept. 10, 2005	Los Angeles
TKO 10	Morales Jan. 21, 2006	Las Vegas
UD 12	Oscar Larios July 2, 2006	Manila
KO 3	Morales Nov. 18, 2006	Las Vegas
KO 8	Jorge Solis April 14, 2007	San Antonio
UD 12	Barrera Oct. 6, 2007	Las Vegas
SD 12	Marquez March 15, 2008	Las Vegas
TKO 9	David Diaz June 28, 2008	Las Vegas
TKO 8	Oscar De La Hoya Dec. 6, 2008	Las Vegas
UD 12	Antonio Margarito Nov. 13, 2010	Arlington, Texas

IS MANNY PACQUIAO THE MOST POPULAR ATHLETE IN THE WORLD?

WORDS: GARY ANDREW POOLE / IMAGE: CHRIS FARINA / TOP RANK / JOE KLAMAR / GETTY IMAGES

"THE WORLD'S MOST POPULAR ATHLETE" **MIGHT BE THE MOST OUTRAGEOUS.**

Manny Pacquiao, considered by many the best boxer in the world, has been described with a variety of superlatives: "A demigod", "a cultural icon," "the greatest offensive fighter ever," "the fastest hands in the world," "the greatest of all greats." Lennox Lewis once likened the Filipino boxer's importance to Nelson Mandela, the Nobel Peace Prize winner who helped end apartheid and lead an entire nation through a peaceful transition into a democratic government.

But of all these fluffy words, "the world's most popular athlete" might be the most outrageous.

More popular than Lionel Messi, Michael Schumacher, Usain Bolt, Kobe Bryant, Wayne Rooney or David Beckham?

Six years ago, about the time Manny Pacquiao was plowing through opponents and gaining his stature in the sports world, a

WNBA star Tamika Catchings is as popular as Manny Pacquiao, according to the Davie-Brown Index, which measures celebrity attributes and name recognition.

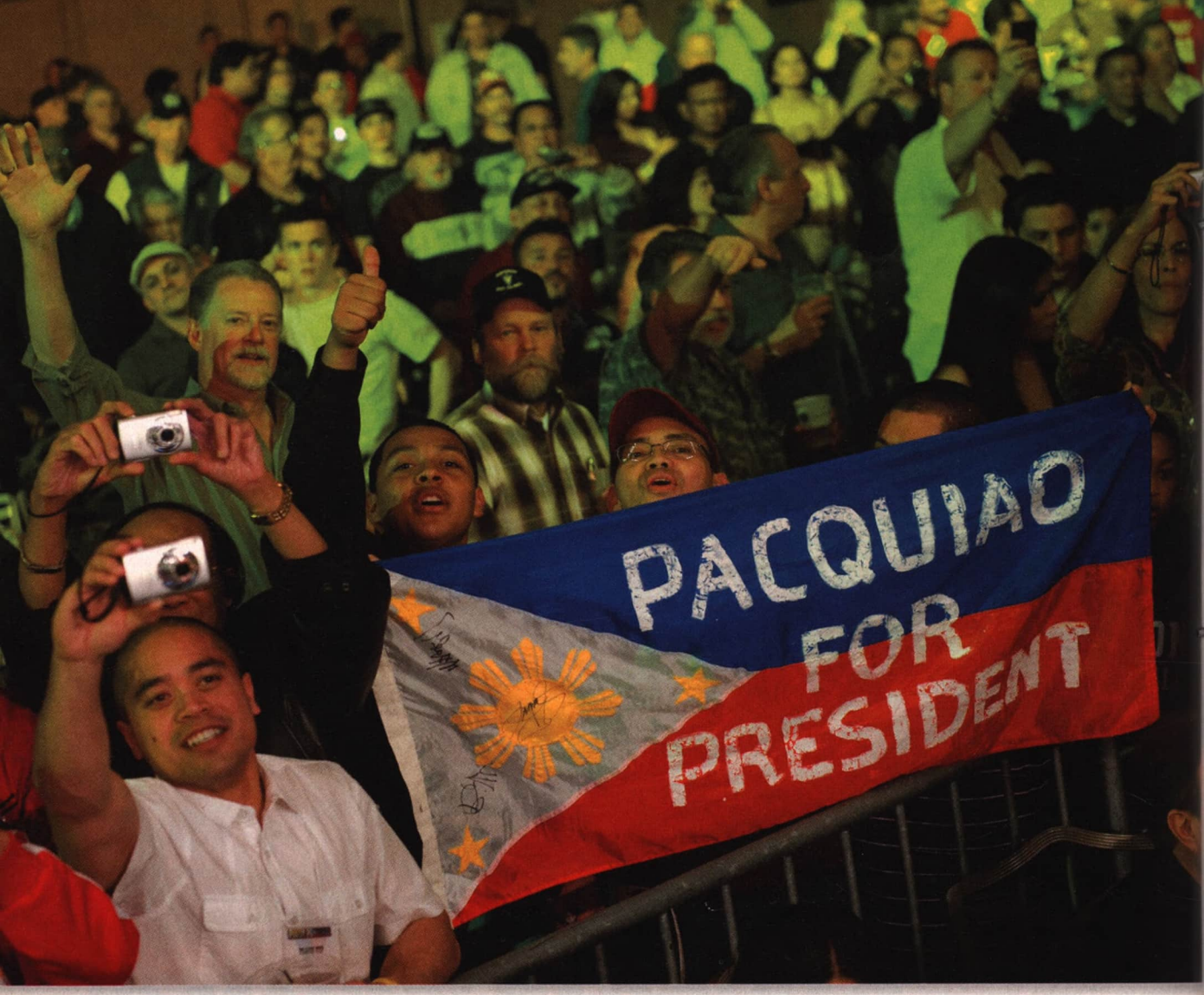
book appeared on the New York Times bestseller list and stayed there for 27 weeks. Harry Frankfurt, a philosophy professor, wrote the prescient non-fiction tome, which had one of the better titles of all time: On Bullshit. Frankfurt wrote about how bullshit can either be true or false, but that bullshitters themselves aim primarily to impress and persuade their audiences, and in general are unconcerned with the truth or falsehood of their statements. (Yes, yes, dear reader of The Ring, a good job description for some of the more prominent boxing promoters of our age.) As a scholar on the art of bullshit, it is not hard to imagine that Frankfurt would enjoy studying its regular practice in boxing. He says that liars need to know the truth to better conceal it, while bullshitters are solely interested in advancing their own agendas. "One of the most salient features of our culture is that there is so much bullshit," he wrote. "Everyone knows this. Each of us contributes his share. But we tend to take the situation for granted. Most people are rather confident of their ability to recognize bullshit and to avoid being taken in by it. So the phenomenon has not aroused much deliberate concern, nor attracted much sustained inquiry."

Except for politics, of course, boxing is one of the most active epicenters of bullshit. So that is why it is interesting to look at the claim that Manny Pacquiao is the most popular athlete in the world. The brilliance of the claim, by Pacquiao's handlers, is that it is so difficult to verify. Within the United States, Pacquiao only ranks with the WNBA's Tamika Catchings and the PGA Tour's Y.E. Yang, according to the Davie-Brown Index, which measures celebrity attributes and name recognition.

And yet it is easy for a Pacquiao devotee to simply say that the boxer is popular everywhere except the United States. But it does beg the question: America's boxing writers named Pacquiao the greatest boxer of the decade but his popularity is equivalent to a no-name like Y.E. Yang and a WNBA player?

Boxing, a sport fed by an oral tradition, has a grand history of braggadocio. Muhammad Ali was the most clever and beloved boxer-braggart because his words had substance. Boxing is full of great storytellers, and some of the most successful promoters are wonderful bullshit artistes. Seasoned boxing writers, as a group, are so used to excessive hyperbole that when a promoter starts talking up his fighter the more discerning of scribes stop note-taking, turn off their microphones, sigh, and just listen to the shoveling of mierda. These writers, a dying breed, have finely tuned B.S. detectors and they serve the boxing public as filters.

The boxing game, for better or worse, is built on outrageousness (Floyd Mayweather Jr. burning $100 bills comes to mind) that would foment a serious debate in another sport. But even though it is par for the course, the hyperbole seems more outrageous and less relevant today. It feels a little desperate ("I was lying yesterday, I'm telling the truth today"), like how professional wrestling was built on faux drama; pro wrestling is now a struggling "sport," by the way. Boxing has relied on the fumes of (ersatz) drama for the last 20 years, too, and so maybe it should be toned down for its own good. For example, it used to be that there was some sort of moratorium on equating oneself with Muhammad Ali, but even that unwritten law has been broken in the fractured dialogue between the Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr. camps. Although it is rare that someone claims a fighter is more exciting or better than Ali, Bob Arum has



been known to make this claim about Pacquiao, and Mayweather Jr. has rambled on about being better than the Greatest of All Time, too. (Can you imagine Tom Brady crowing that he is better than Joe Montana?) It is also difficult to imagine Ali not willing to fight his biggest foe. Ali understood the public's desire for real drama.

Boxing is a freelance sport, as Bert Sugar once said, and so everyone is struggling for attention. But it has also become a niche sport, and it makes you wonder if the hyperbole is simply making the fistic arts into more of a joke. Even the UFC reins in the claims about its fighters, making the sport seem less archaic. Maybe boxing needs more of the straightforward attitude of the UFC's Dana White?

Boasting is part of the churn of fight publicity, but maybe it has become too much, turning boxing into a parody. Much of the public has simply tuned it out. After Floyd Mayweather Jr. controversially KO'd Victor Ortiz, "Money" verbally sparred with Larry Merchant, 80, who told the fighter, "If I was 50 years younger, I would kick your ass." It became an instant Youtube sensation, at least partly because it was boxing's Simon Cowell moment. Merchant cut through the malarkey and said what the public wanted to hear.

Pacquiao's popularity, which does, to a small degree, transcend boxing, continues to increase. He represented Hewlett-Packard in its tablet TV ad campaign (he didn't seem to impact sales very much since the product has been discontinued), people are willing to listen and pay to hear his squeaky voice (he has released a relatively popular recording of Sometimes When We Touch), and if you believe his PR machine, 100,000 people showed up in Manila to watch him during the run-up to the Juan Manuel Marquez fight. (The Associated Press estimated the crowd as closer to 3,000, a mere difference of 97,000 people.) But if you notice: Pacquiao isn't a braggart. Perhaps his popularity is based on his humility and the planet's appreciation for it. As for being on par with Nelson Mandela? Manny the Congressman has a lot more work to do. Pacquiao is worshipped by many, but most popular athlete in the world? Probably not. Until he fights Floyd Mayweather Jr., and wins.

Gary Andrew Poole writes for TIME and The Atlantic. He is the author of PacMan: Behind the Scenes with Manny Pacquiao (Da Capo), which The Guardian named one of the best books of 2010. The biography is out in paperback this November. ■

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10 GREATEST MEXICAN FIGHTERS

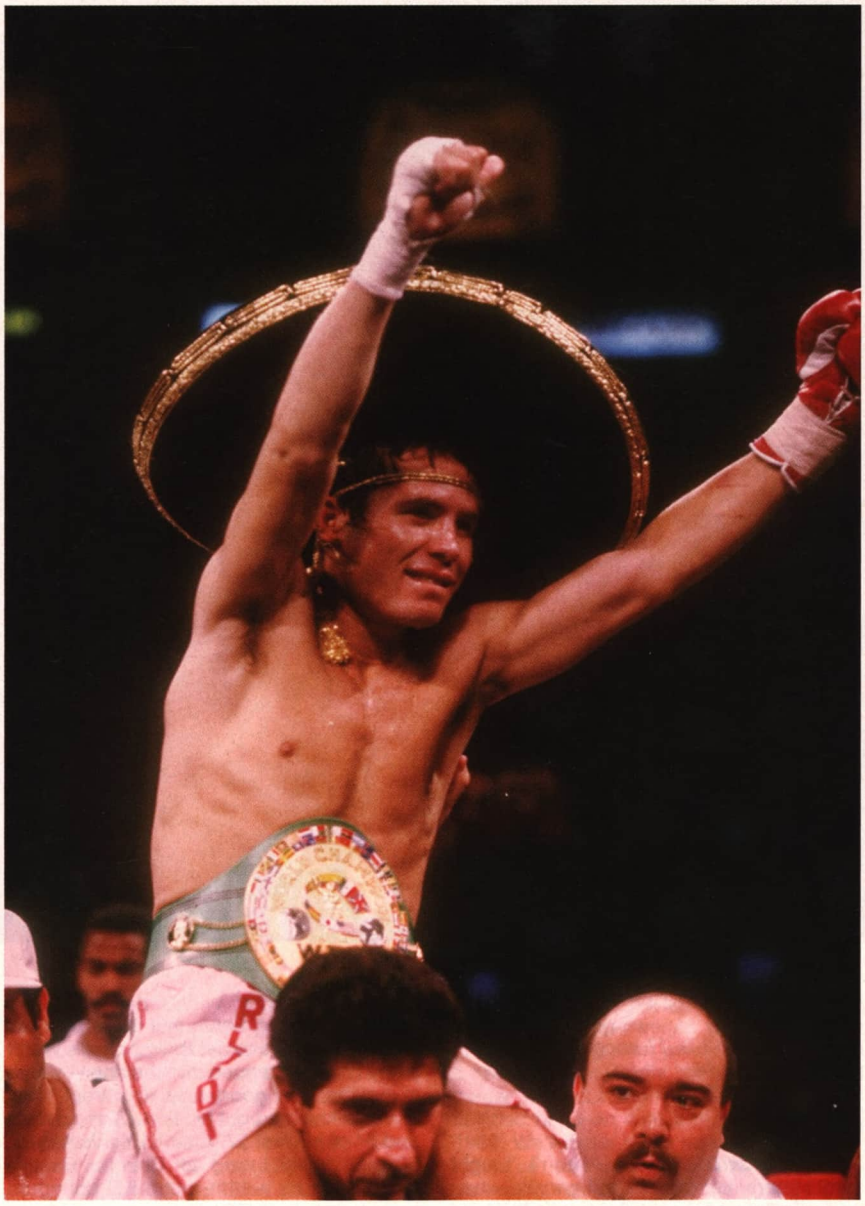
WORDS: MICHAEL ROSENTHAL / IMAGES: HOLLY STEIN / ALLSPORT / GETTY IMAGES / JAM MEDIA / CHRIS COZZONE / FIGHTWIREIMAGES / AL BELLO

Juan Manuel Marquez is destined to be remembered as one of Mexico's greatest fighters whether or not he beats Manny Pacquiao on Nov. 12 in Las Vegas.

The same goes for his contemporary rivals Erik Morales and Marco Antonio Barrera, who dominated their era. The great trio has won consistently and given us countless thrills.

But where do they rate among the best Mexican fighters who ever lived?

THE RING tries to answer that question here by providing a Top 10 list. We readily acknowledge this is hardly the last word on this subject; it's only the beginning of the discussion.

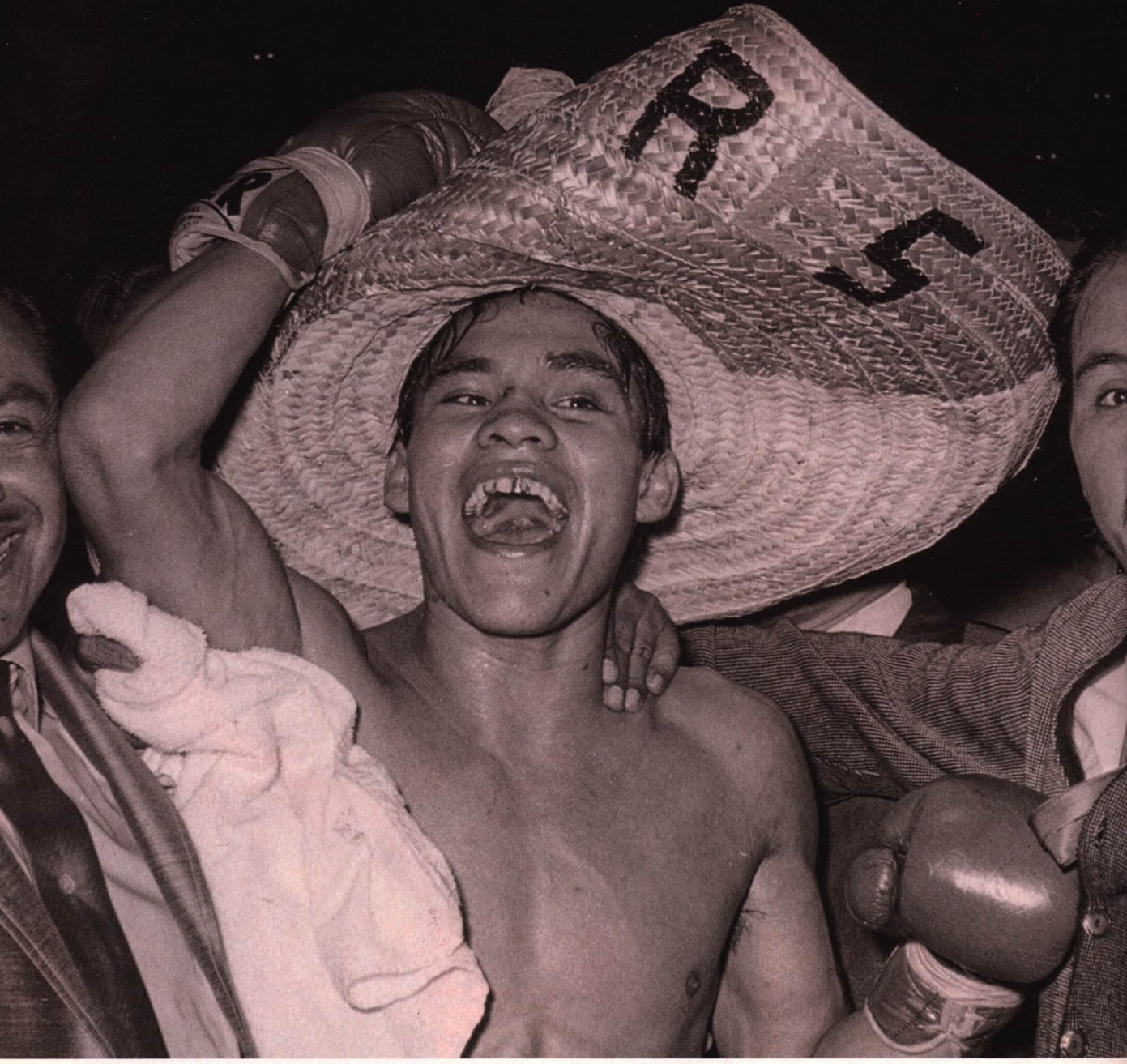


1. JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ

RECORD: 107-6-2, 86 knockouts
ACTIVE: 1980-2005
HALL OF FAME: 2011

BACKGROUND: Born poor in Culiacan, Mexico, Julio Cesar Chavez evolved into much more than just a gifted boxer. He grew into an unrivaled symbol of pride for his countrymen and became a true people's champion. He won his fights with remarkable consistency and, outside the ring, embraced his fans as they did him. It was a true love affair. Chavez methodically demolished his opponents, pounding both the body (his specialty) and the head until they could take no more. It happened time and again. And it seemed his chin, one of the best in the boxing history, could withstand a lightning bolt. That formula produced the greatest fighter ever from a country known for great fighters. He was undefeated in his first 90 fights over 14 years (89-0-1), a controversial draw against Pernell Whitaker being the only flaw on his resume. The list of fighters he defeated reads like a Hall of Fame: Roger Mayweather, Juan Laporte, Rocky Lockridge, Edwin Rosario, Bazooka Limon, Jose Luis Ramirez, Hector Camacho ... it goes on and on. His greatest moment – and probably the greatest moment in Mexican boxing history – came in 1990 when he oh-so-dramatically stopped Meldrick Taylor with two seconds remaining in a fight he was losing on two cards. He became a god that night. Chavez lost for the first time when Frankie Randall defeated him by a split-decision in 1994, and he would lose five more times, including twice to Oscar De La Hoya, before finally retiring at age 43. However, Chavez's status as a living legend was set in stone long before he began to decline. He finished with six world titles over three weight divisions and the undying admiration of his fellow Mexicans.

YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW: Chavez had one fight early in his career that some believe should be considered a loss. In 1981, he knocked out Miguel Ruiz with a punch that landed at the bell to end the first round. Ruiz was declared the winner by disqualification. However, the next day, the Mexican authorities overturned the result.

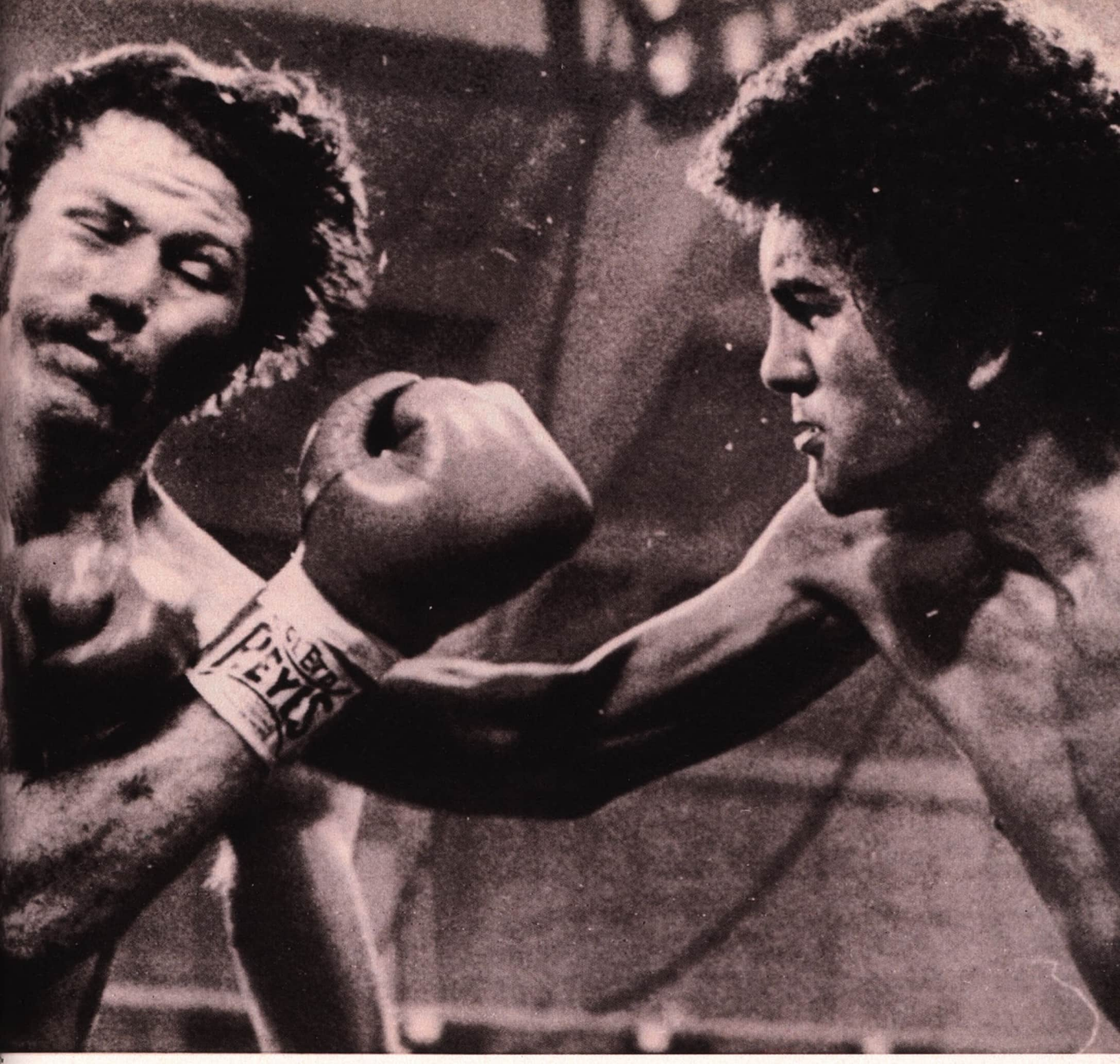


2. RUBEN OLIVARES

RECORD: 88-13-3, 77 knockouts
ACTIVE: 1965-88
HALL OF FAME: 1991

BACKGROUND: Olivares hasn't fought for 23 years, yet crowds still go wild when he walks into an arena. Such was the hold the bantamweight and featherweight star had on his fans, both in the Los Angeles area and Mexico. Why was he so popular? Simple. He won consistently and was one of the most exciting fighters who ever lived. The native of Mexico City had the punching power of a much bigger man – hence the 77 KOs – and was utterly fearless, which made for some of the most memorable fights of the late 1960s and '70s. He didn't win all his biggest fights, but the spectators were guaranteed to get their money's worth every time he stepped into the ring -- which in boxing is a good way to attract fans. Olivares knocked out his first 23 opponents and 54 of his first 57. After 61 fights he was 60-0-1, finally losing to Chucho Castillo in his 62nd by a 14th-round KO during an epic battle in 1970. He was considered by many the greatest bantamweight of all time when he moved up to featherweight in 1972. Like successor Julio Cesar Chavez, Olivares counted among his victims many elite fighters from an era overflowing with stars. Lionel Rose. Jesus Pimentel. Bobby Chacon. Jose Luis Ramirez. The list goes on. Olivares also had his setbacks, which was inevitable in light of his attacking style. He fell to Rafael Herrera (twice), Alexis Arguello, Danny Lopez and Eusebio Pedroza among others. Eight of his 13 losses came in his final 19 fights, which included two one-fight comebacks in the '80s. But even in defeat, Olivares always fought with the heart of a true warrior. For that, his fans will be forever grateful.

YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW: Olivares fought a remarkable 22 times at the Forum in Inglewood, Calif., thus becoming the greatest boxing attraction ever at the now-defunct venue. He went 15-6-1 (with 12 KOs) against some the best fighters of his era there.

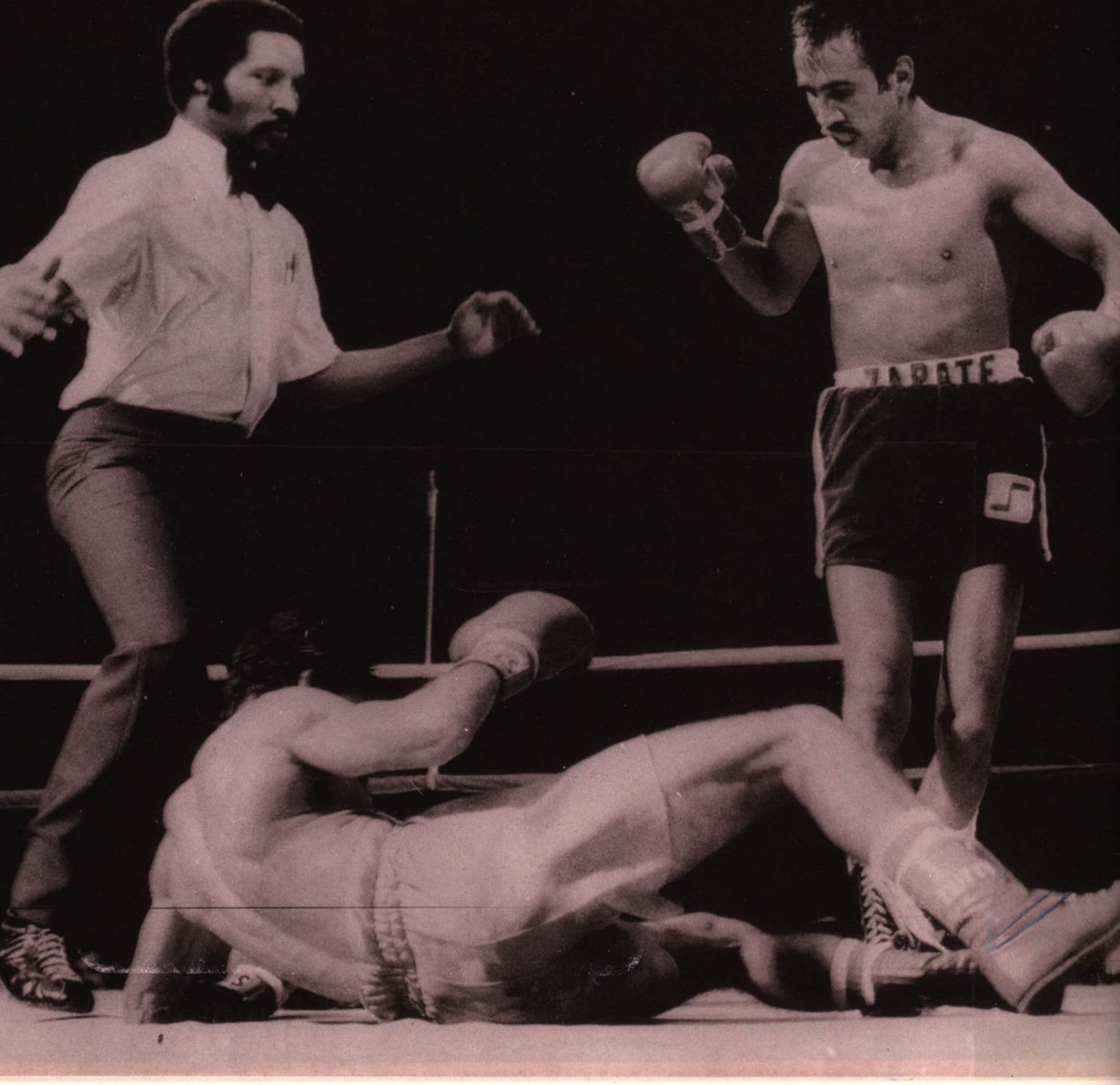


3. SALVADOR SANCHEZ

RECORD: 44-1-1 (32 knockouts)
ACTIVE: 1975-82
HALL OF FAME: 1991

BACKGROUND: The thing about Sanchez that stands out most was his tragic demise, the result of a car crash in Mexico when he was only 23 and approaching his boxing prime. For that reason, we might overlook the fact that he was a fabulous boxer with solid punching power. Sanchez fought almost exclusively in his native Mexico from 1975 to 1977, the period in which he lost a split decision to Antonio Becerra for the Mexican bantamweight title in Mazatlan. He would never lose again. Sanchez had just become a recognized contender when he challenged Danny "Little Red" Lopez for his WBC featherweight title in 1980. No contest. Sanchez dominated his more-established foe before stopping him in the 13th round, thus claiming his only world title and becoming an instant star. He would successfully defend his belt nine times against some of the best 126-pounders in the world, including Ruben Castillo, Lopez (in a rematch), Juan LaPorte and a young Azumah Nelson. However, the biggest victory of his career came against Wilfredo Gomez, a dangerous Puerto Rican who was the toast of his country after stopping Carlos Zarate. The Mexicans wanted revenge and Sanchez gave it to them, handing Gomez his first loss by an eighth-round knockout. Sanchez was now a full-fledged hero in Mexico, and this seemed to be only the beginning. He was training for a rematch with LaPorte and had talked about moving up to lightweight to challenge the great Alexis Arguello, which would've been a hell of a fight. Sadly, though, his life and career were cut short when his sports car collided head-on with a truck on Aug. 12, 1982. We'll never know how great Sanchez would've been. We do know that he accomplished a great deal in a short time, enough to be considered one of the best featherweights ever.

YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW: Sanchez graced the cover of THE RING Magazine twice. He was pictured on the November 1981 cover a few months after he stopped Gomez. And he and Sugar Ray Leonard – Co-Fighters of the Year for 1981 – shared the cover in March 1982.



4. CARLOS ZARATE

RECORD: 66-4 (63 knockouts)
ACTIVE: 1970-88
HALL OF FAME: 1994

BACKGROUND: Only a select few fighters in history punched with the devastating power of Zarate, who was one of the most feared and entertaining fighters of the 1970s. The native of Tepito, Mexico stopped an astounding 51 of his first 52 opponents. He reportedly is only fighter to have two streaks of 20-plus knockouts. And all but nine of his total KOs occurred within five rounds. Indeed, fans weren't destined to witness long fights when Zarate stepped into the ring, but they were all but guaranteed a knockout, which made him one of the most-popular fighters of his era. Zarate's greatest victory was a fourth-round TKO of then-unbeaten slugger Alfonso Zamora, who went down three times. He also stopped Albert Davila in eight rounds. Zarate accepted a monumental challenge when he agreed to move up in weight and face then-unbeaten junior featherweight champion Wilfredo Gomez in 1978 -- in Gomez's native Puerto Rico, no less. Gomez scored a fifth-round TKO in a thrilling fight, the first of only three losses in Zarate's career. He would fight three more times in the first portion of his career, the last fight a loss to Lupe Pintor by a controversial decision that cost Zarate his WBC bantamweight belt in 1979. He then retired only to make an improbable comeback seven years later, in 1986. He ran off a streak of 12 victories over limited opponents before losing his final two fights, a technical decision to Jeff Fenech for the WBC junior featherweight title and a 10th-round TKO against Daniel Zaragoza in another bid for the WBC belt. He retired for good after that. Zarate will always be remembered as one of the biggest punchers in the history of the sport.

YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW: Zarate's son Carlos Jr. is a rising lightweight prospect. The younger Zarate (14-0, 9 KOs) has fought exclusively in Mexico but figures to gain to some fame if he continues to win, given his bloodline. His KO ratio would seem to indicate that he doesn't have the old man's punching power, though.

SUPER SIX
WORLD BOXING CLASSIC
THE SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
The
FINAL
WARD
VS
FROCH
WBA/WBC SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT UNIFICATION CHAMPIONSHIP
SAT DEC 17, 9PM ET PT
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Photography by Howard Schatz

5. MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA

RECORD: 67-7 (44 knockouts)
ACTIVE: 1989-current
HALL OF FAME: Not yet

BACKGROUND: Barrera's handlers described the fighter as a law student when he began to make a name for himself, an obvious publicity gimmick even if there was truth to it. But Barrera needed no gimmicks. The man could fight. A member of the great Mexican trio – Barrera, Erik Morales and Juan Manuel Marquez – he was a fierce warrior by nature who later reinvented himself as a boxer in order to extend his career. Barrera perhaps is best known for his epic trilogy with arch-rival Erik Morales, narrowly winning two of their wars. Even so, fighting mostly for Forum Boxing, he remained at or near the top of the heap for most of a 12-year period. He went an eye-popping 21-4 in major title fights between 1995 and 2007. His victims, aside from Morales, included Kennedy McKinney (in the fight that kicked off HBO's Boxing After Dark), Jesus Salud and then-unbeaten Nasem Hamed. Barrera had his slip-ups, but proved his mettle by bouncing back each time. Some believed his career was in free-fall when he lost back-to-back fights against Junior Jones in 1996 and 1997. The Morales trilogy took place after that. And he seemed to be finished when Manny Pacquiao stopped him in 11 rounds in 2003. Yet two fights later, he outpointed Morales to win the WBC junior lightweight title and successfully defended four times. We can debate whether he belongs ahead of Morales here. The reason he is No. 5 and Morales is No. 6 is this: Their overall resumes are comparable but Barrera won two of their three head-to-head meetings. Barrera fights on at 37. Does he have some surprises in store for us? Don't put it past him.

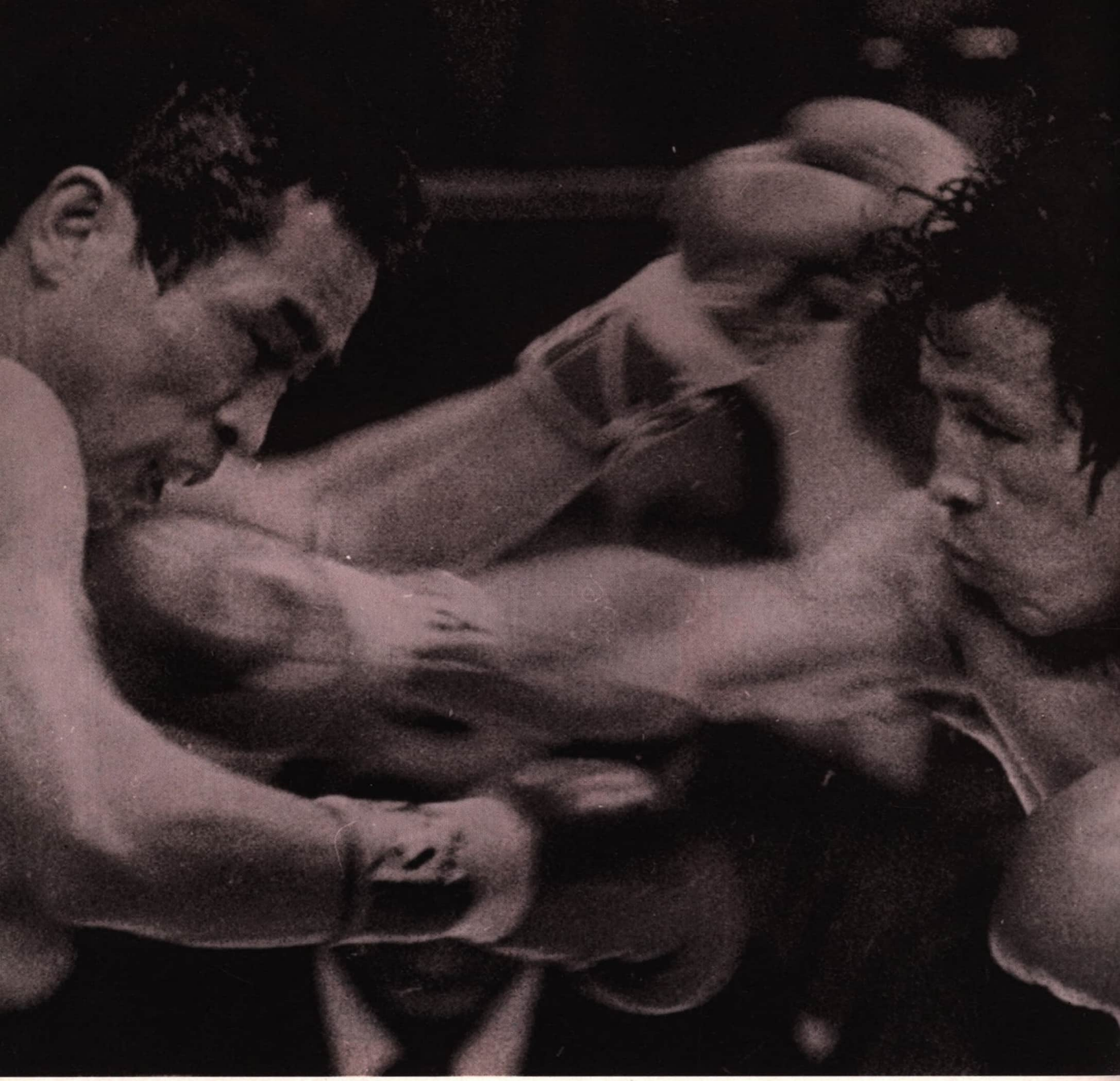
YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW: Barrera reportedly was 56-4 as an amateur and won five national championships in his country – all before he turned 15, which is when he became a professional fighter.

6. ERIK MORALES

RECORD: 51-7 (35 knockouts)
ACTIVE: 1993-current
HALL OF FAME: Not yet

BACKGROUND: Morales is a fighter's fighter, a superb boxer with the temperament of a reckless warrior. He might or might not have been better than contemporaries Marco Antonio Barrera and Juan Manuel Marquez, but he probably was the mostv fun to watch, which made him a fan favorite. Morales' record in title fights was comparable to Barrera's, 18-3. He beat Hall of Famer Daniel Zaragoza by an 11th-round KO to win the WBC junior featherweight title and successfully defended nine times. That included a victory over Junior Jones, who twice beat Barrera, and a split decision over Barrera in the first of their three unforgettable fights. He then moved up to featherweight and took the WBC title from Guty Espadas Jr. by decision. "El Terrible" suffered his first defeat nine years into his career with his second fight against Barrera, who won a close but unanimous decision in 2002. Barrera won the rubber match by a majority decision in 2004, giving him bragging rights over his not-so-friendly rival. Morales bounced back by becoming the last to beat Manny Pacquiao, winning a close but unanimous decision in 2005. No one could've predicted what would follow for Morales. The great champion lost his next four fights, including two knockouts against Pacquiao that seemed to signal the end of his career. He "retired" after losing a decision to David Diaz in 2007, then returned at a more-comfortable weight 2½ years later and beat four journeymen -- but looking quite mortal in the process. That's why it seemed suicidal when he agreed to fight Marcos Maidana in April. Turns out he was sane. He gave the hard-punching Maidana all he could handle in a losing cause to re-establish himself as a legitimate contender. The hardnosed veteran made Mexican history in September by stopping Pablo Cesar Cano after 10 grueling rounds to claim his fourth major title (the WBC 140-pound belt) in a fourth weight class. Never underestimate Morales.

YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW: Morales has two brothers who have found success in boxing. Diego Morales (37-2, 27 KOS) held the WBO junior bantamweight title and Ivan "El Terrible II" Morales (11-0, 6 KOs) is a bantamweight prospect.



7. MIGUEL CANTO

RECORD: 61-9-4 (15 knockouts)
ACTIVE: 1969-82
HALL OF FAME: 1998

BACKGROUND: Canto, a 5-foot-1 flyweight champion, was unusual for a Mexican fighter in that he was known more as a boxing master than a brawler. Hence his nickname: El Maestro (The Master). Canto, trained by Jesus Rivero, apparently admired the great Willie Pep and fought somewhat like him. He used great natural speed and ring generalship to outbox and outwit his opponents, who generally were baffled by his skills. He also was known to train very hard, which gave him great stamina in his fights. Canto lost a majority decision to Betulio Gonzalez for the vacant WBC flyweight title in 1973 but, after Shoji Oguma took it from Gonzalez, Canto defeated Oguma by a majority decision to claim the belt. He successfully defended the title an impressive 14 times over the next three-plus years, establishing himself as one of the best little men of his era. He won only one of his defenses by knockout, however -- stark evidence of his lack of punching power. He finally lost the title to Chan-Hee Park in 1979 and drew with Park in a rematch. Canto never again fought for a title and finished his career by losing four of his final five fights. Canto's legacy was already established by that time, though. He was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1998, the ultimate recognition of his many accomplishments.

YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW: Jesus Rivero later surfaced in the U.S. as the trainer of Oscar De La Hoya for three fights in 1996-97. De La Hoya won all three, stopping Julio Cesar Chavez in four rounds and outpointing Miguel Angel Gonzalez and Pernell Whitaker. Some believe De La Hoya would've been well-served to stick with Rivero, a defensive specialist.

8. RICARDO LOPEZ

RECORD: 51-0-1 (38 knockouts)
ACTIVE: 1985-2001
HALL OF FAME: 2007

BACKGROUND: Lopez has the rare distinction of retiring undefeated. Only a technical draw against Rosendo Alvarez in 1998, which he avenged in a rematch, sullies his otherwise perfect record. Lopez was a boxing wizard with crushing power, a true wonder who was largely overlooked because he fought almost all of his career as a strawweight against opponents (mostly Asian) with whom only hardcore fans were familiar. He could drive you crazy with a tremendously effective jab or destroy you with a hook to the body or a straight right to the head. There was no escape against Lopez. He won the WBC strawweight title in 1990 by stopping Hideyuki Ohashi in five rounds and successfully defended a record 21 times, including the draw with Alvarez. Sixteen of his defenses came by way of knockout. He unified the title (adding the WBO belt) in 1997 by stopping Alex Sanchez in five rounds. He also won the WBA version when he defeated Alvarez in the rematch, even though the Nicaraguan came in grossly overweight. Lopez added the IBF junior flyweight title to his resume by outpointing Will Grigsby in 1999 and successfully defended two times, after which he retired at age 34. In his final fight he stopped Zolani Petelo in eight rounds, a great way for a great fighter to go out. Lopez has worked as a television commentator since his retirement.

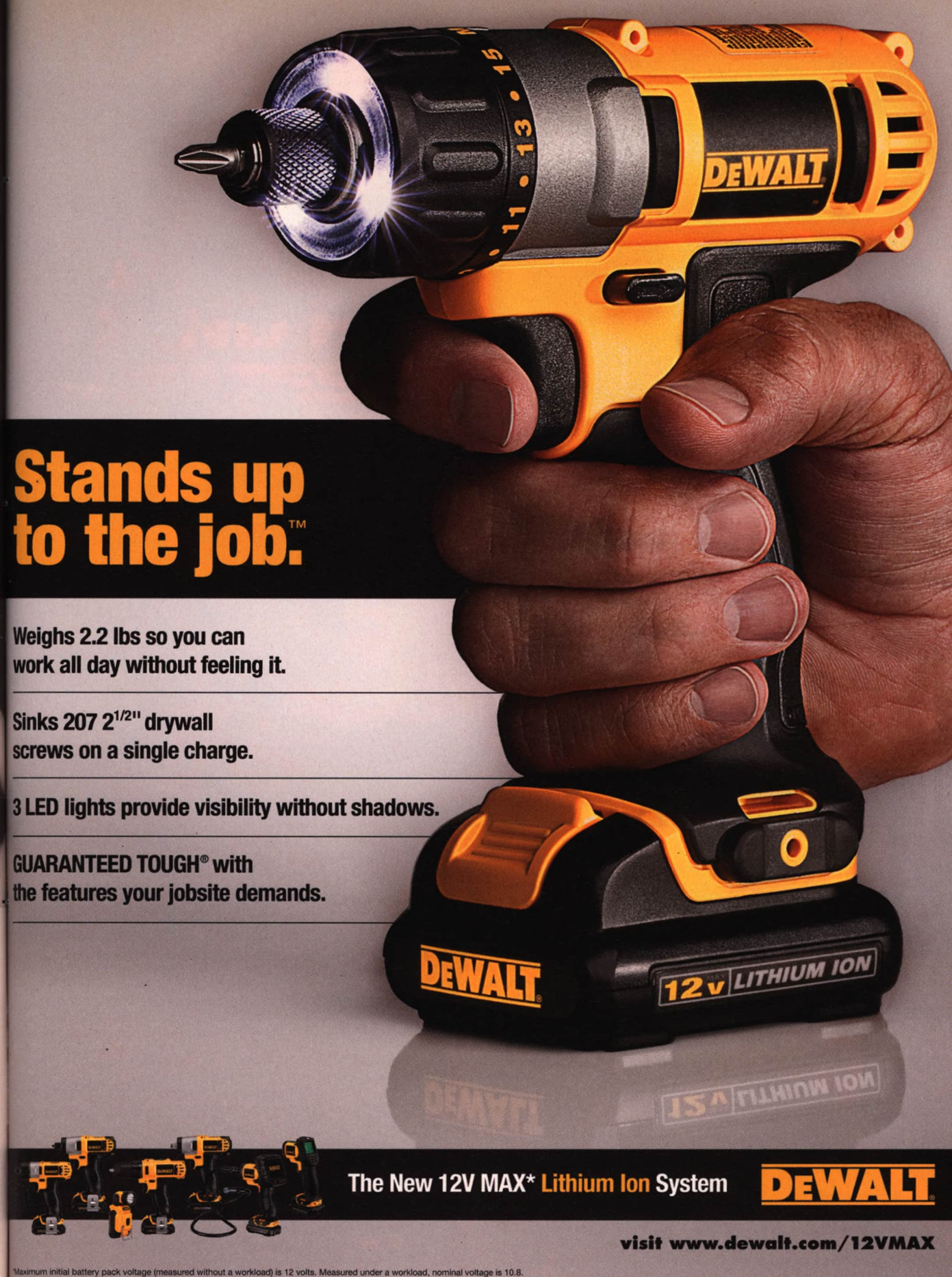
YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW: Lopez did not have the typical hardscrabble upbringing of a boxer. His father reportedly was a successful watchmaker who raised his family in a middle-class neighborhood in Mexico City. Dad just happened to be a fan of boxing, which inspired young Ricardo.

9. VICENTE SALDIVAR

RECORD: 37-3 (26 knockouts)
ACTIVE: 1961-73
HALL OF FAME: 1999

BACKGROUND: Saldivar is somewhat lost in history, buried beneath so many great more-recent Mexican champions that he is often overlooked. That's a mistake. Saldivar, a southpaw, was a complete fighter who defeated the best featherweights of his time, including Hall of Famers Ismael Laguna (Dec. 10) and Sugar Ramos (TKO 12) in back-to-back fights. And, a precursor to the likes of Ruben Olivares and Julio Cesar Chavez, he was a hero to his countrymen. Saldivar took the WBC and WBA 126-pound titles from Ramos in 1964 and successfully defended eight times, after which he abruptly "retired" at the tender age of 24 and at the height of his skills. Saldivar announced in the ring at Estadio Azteca after he stopped Howard Winstone that he had enough money and wanted to enjoy life while he was young. Some of the fans reportedly wept. Of course, Saldivar returned less than two years later. And, in only his second fight back in 1970, he outpointed Johnny Famechon to regain the WBC title in Italy, thus proving he was among the best of his era. That was his last hurrah. He lost the title in his next fight to Kuniaki Shibata, who won by KO when Saldivar didn't come out for the 13th round. It was the first time Saldivar failed to go the distance. He fought twice more, outpointing capable Frankie Crawford in 1971 but losing by fourth-round KO to Hall of Famer Eder Jofre after another long layoff. He then retired permanently at 30. Saldivar went on to train fighters in Mexico. He died of a heart attack at 42.

YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW: Saldivar fought for Mexico in the 1960 Olympics in Rome when he was only 17 years old. He lost to Ernst Chervet of Switzerland in the first round of the competition. As we know, he made up for that disappointment as a professional.



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10. JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ

RECORD: 53-5-1 (39 knockouts)
ACTIVE: 1993-current
HALL OF FAME: Not yet

BACKGROUND: Marquez fought much of his career in the shadows of his more-popular countrymen, Erik Morales and Marco Antonio. "Dinamita" relied more on his boxing skills than his punching power early in his career, which might've been one reason he was overlooked. The formula worked, though: He won consistently from the beginning. He lost his first fight and didn't lose again until he was outpointed by Freddie Norwood during his first title shot in 1999. Marquez would have to wait four more years for another such opportunity, but took advantage of it this time, stopping Manuel Medina in seven rounds to win the vacant IBF featherweight title. It wasn't until three fights later that he caught the attention of the world. Manny Pacquiao, a dynamo from the Philippines, put Marquez down three times in the first round of what appeared to be rout, but Marquez rallied to earn an impressive draw. Some believe he should've been awarded the decision. After that, there was no stopping Marquez, who was then being compared to Morales and Barrera. He outpointed Barrera to win the WBC junior lightweight title in 2007 but lost it to Pacquiao two fights later by a split decision. Again, according to many observers, Marquez was robbed. Marquez had become more of a puncher by this time. After the second Pacquiao fight, he stopped Joel Casamayor and Juan Diaz in memorable fights. He then moved up in weight to fight Floyd Mayweather Jr. and was overwhelmed. He bounced back with a decision over Diaz and KOs of Michael Katsidis and Likar Ramos. Marquez is one of the most-respected and most-exciting fighters on the planet at 38. Better late than never.

YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW: Pacquiao has outpointed Marquez by only one (679-678) when all six of the cards from their two fights are added up.

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10 MORE (in alphabetical order): Kid Azteca, Baby Arizmendi, Jose Becerra, Pipino Cuevas, Humberto Gonzalez, Rafael Marquez, Carlos Palomino, Chalky Wright, Daniel Zaragoza and Juan Zurita.

MARQUEZ FOUND HIS GREATEST SUCCESS LATE IN HIS CAREER

WORDS: **JAKE DONOVAN** / IMAGES: **NAOKI FUKUDA / CHRIS COZZONE / FIGHTWIRE IMAGES**

The greatest athletes always find a way to remain at the top level for as long as nature will allow, even at the risk of tweaking – if not changing altogether – what made them so special in the first place.

It can be the explosive, high-flying dunker who decides to preserve his legs and develop a mid-range jumper. It's the lights-out pitcher who takes just enough off of his fastball and applies it to the other five or six pitches in his arsenal in staying ahead of the batters.

Often in the case of boxers who find ways to overlap generations, it can be high volume punchers finding ways to slow down the action to their desired tempo. A knockout artist suddenly figures out how to stick and move, and that there isn't necessarily any harm in the occasional clinch if it means clearing your own head while getting inside that of your opponent.

Sometimes the reverse is true, where the once fleet-footed fighter realizes that his legs are beginning to betray him and now puts more behind his punches. The fighter who formerly picked and chose his spots early on now controls the action at his leisure, forcing his opposition to play catch-up rather than his trying to keep up with the sport's next wave of stars.

MARQUEZ HAS MADE ENOUGH SUBTLE ADJUSTMENTS TO NOT ONLY **REMAIN RELEVANT 18 YEARS INTO HIS CAREER BUT ALSO SERVE AS ONE OF THE SPORT'S VERY BEST.**

The very last part to a small degree describes the late surge of Juan Manuel Marquez, who has managed to outlast an industry that – by and large – did everything in its power to betray him.

Marquez has made enough subtle adjustments to not only remain relevant 18 years into his career but also serve as one of the sport's very best. The biggest contributing factors, however, were simply patience and the proper opportunity to shine.

The patience he has exuded in outlasting an entire generation of fighters has now been parlayed into a long-sought after third fight with history-making superstar Manny Pacquiao, as the longtime rivals are set to square off again on Nov. 12 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

Even with his lack of proven success beyond the lightweight division that Marquez has ruled for more than two years, the 38-year old Mexican isn't necessarily viewed as high-profile cannon fodder for the sport's current pound-for-pound king in this particular matchup.

Those who give him a chance – however slim it may be – point to his pair of epic wars with the Filipino southpaw, the outcomes of which are debated to this very day. Marquez was decked a total of four times over the course of their 24 thrilling and blood-soaked rounds spent together, yet many argue that he deserves a record of 2-0 in the series.

The general belief heading into Nov. 12 is that Pacquiao will finally put some significant difference between the two, based on his success at welterweight – and really every weight he's tried in a career – that ranks favorably among the best to have ever laced 'em up.

The other side of the coin is the suggestion that perhaps Marquez has his number and that the third time will in fact be a charm. Leapfrogging two weight divisions (nine pounds to be exact, given the 144-pound catch weight in place) doesn't change that perception, since he's still generally the same fighter who the sport has come to appreciate.

That's where his own patience comes into play. Such patience has always existed. Where some see change, those closest to him correctly recognize an evolution that somehow hasn't yet hit its downward slope.

Marquez once was merely a name floated around, but whose credentials weren't quite yet confirmed. The 29 wins that followed a disqualification loss in his pro debut looked impressive enough, and also suggested his ability to overcome adversity. However, unless you lived in Mexico City or on the West Coast, chances are that you best knew him as "that guy Naz won't face," a reference to then-unbeaten featherweight Prince Naseem Hamed allegedly avoiding then-mandatory challenger Marquez at all costs.

He could've continued to chase Hamed, but his handlers didn't want to waste their time and decided to go in another direction. It resulted in what should've been the perfect introduction to the big time – a WBA featherweight title shot against Freddie Norwood on an HBO broadcast also dedicated to hyping up the biggest fight the sport had to offer at the time, the welterweight collision between Felix Trinidad and Oscar De La Hoya.

Trinidad-De la Hoya was a big enough event to where the controversial outcome and their celebrity status left people talking (if only for all of the wrong reasons) for years on end.

Marquez's failed title bid against Norwood was simply a bad fight that was ultimately forgotten in the grand scheme of things. Sadly, talented-but-forgettable became his legacy in what should've been the heart of his prime due to surrounding company.

Career-redeeming knockouts of Robbie Peden and Manuel Medina – the latter beginning his first title reign – went a long way toward removing the bad taste left behind with the Norwood debacle. Yet when compared to the careers of his more-celebrated countrymen Marco Antonio Barrera and Erik Morales, both wins barely registered.

It didn't help that Marquez was unable to get either of his divisional rivals in the ring while all were in their respective primes. His patience did lead to a May '04 showdown with Pacquiao, in which Marquez – despite suffering three first-round knockdowns – shone brighter in their 12-round draw than in any of his wins to that point.

The fight was as thrilling as its ending was inconclusive, a perfect formula for a rematch. However, the other constant in Marquez's boxing life is also what put those plans – and functionally his career – on hold.

Marquez and his brother, Rafael, have been blessed enough to have in their corner one of the greatest boxing minds of all time in Ignacio "Nacho" Beristain. The evolution of Juan Manuel Marquez as a prizefighter – specifically the transformation from counter puncher to boxer-puncher – is largely attributed to the easily identifiable mastermind who refers to the three-division champ as "the greatest fighter I've ever trained.

Beristain is referred to by many as "El Rey Midas," a reference to his golden touch when it comes to training. Where the Hall of Fame trainer isn't quite as gifted, though, is in the art of management, as evidenced by the four years it took for Marquez to finally land a rematch with the Pinoy idol because they rejected a $750,000 offer for a return go in 2005.

Sandwiched in between were quality, yet largely ignored wins over Orlando Salido and Victor Polo, and a trip halfway around the world to face Chris John, a fight that came with a paltry $32,000 payday and resulted in his first loss in seven years.

The fallout in the failed Pacquiao rematch resulted in a split with Top Rank, though it turned out to be a blessing in disguise for Marquez. While elements of his game have changed ever so slightly, what went a long way toward turning the twilight of his career into a second prime was the support of Golden Boy Promotions, which signed him in late 2006.

His second fight with the California-based company was a career-redefining win over Barrera, a moment that eventually paved the way for a long awaited return fight with Pacquiao, which would come by popular demand a year later.

Marquez came up short in that bout, though many at ringside felt he had done enough to unseat the pound-for-pound king. It went well enough to where he was once again in demand, not just the B-side of a promotion. A win over lineal lightweight king Joel Casamayor introduced him to a new challenge – fending off the next generation of budding stars.

A pair of wins over a fighter 10 years his junior in Juan Diaz – including their 2009 Fight of the Year thriller – and an off-the-canvas ninth-round knockout of Michael Katsidis was Marquez at his very best. The first Diaz fight and the war with Katsidis both saw the gracefully aging veteran taking just enough punishment to entertain the fans, but also delivering enough in return to make sure he wound up way ahead in the end.

A WIN OVER LINEAL LIGHTWEIGHT KING JOEL CASAMAYOR INTRODUCED HIM TO A NEW CHALLENGE – **FENDING OFF THE NEXT GENERATION OF BUDDING STARS.**

It didn't quite work out that way in his September '09 catch weight money grab with a returning Floyd Mayweather Jr., but did result in a career high payday. In fact, the $3.2 million guaranteed purse increased by 25 percent once Mayweather decided that he couldn't make the contractually agreed-upon weight, although Marquez paid the heavy price in the ring, suffering two knockdowns and never looking competitive, or like a fighter who had any business campaigning at welterweight.

The wounds were quickly healed in 2010 with his aforementioned wins over Diaz in their second fight and the Fight of the Year candidate against the always-fun Katsidis. The latter win showed the finished product that fans have waited more than a decade to see, one of the more complete fighters in the sport with the ability to box, brawl and ultimately finish what he started.

As he heads into his third fight with Pacquiao, the initial perception is of an 18-year veteran securing the perfect cash-out opportunity. A $5 million payday (plus a percentage of the pay-per-view profits) for a fight nine pounds above his most effective fighting weight against the very best in the game isn't quite the recipe for prolonging a career, especially when the same exact formula failed miserably just two years prior.

That said, the underlying difference between the Marquez that Pacquiao has twice faced and the one he'll meet in November is his proven worth against two generations of stars. The longtime mid-range jump shooter learned how to explode and play above the rim, but never forgot what made him successful.

The odds say that Pacquiao has an easier go of it this time around than in their previous two encounters. History says that if any fighter can find a way to defy those very odds and redefine the term 'last man standing,' it's Juan Manuel Marquez. ■

POR LOS QUE SE ATREVEN A SUBIR AL RING

CON CARÁCTER

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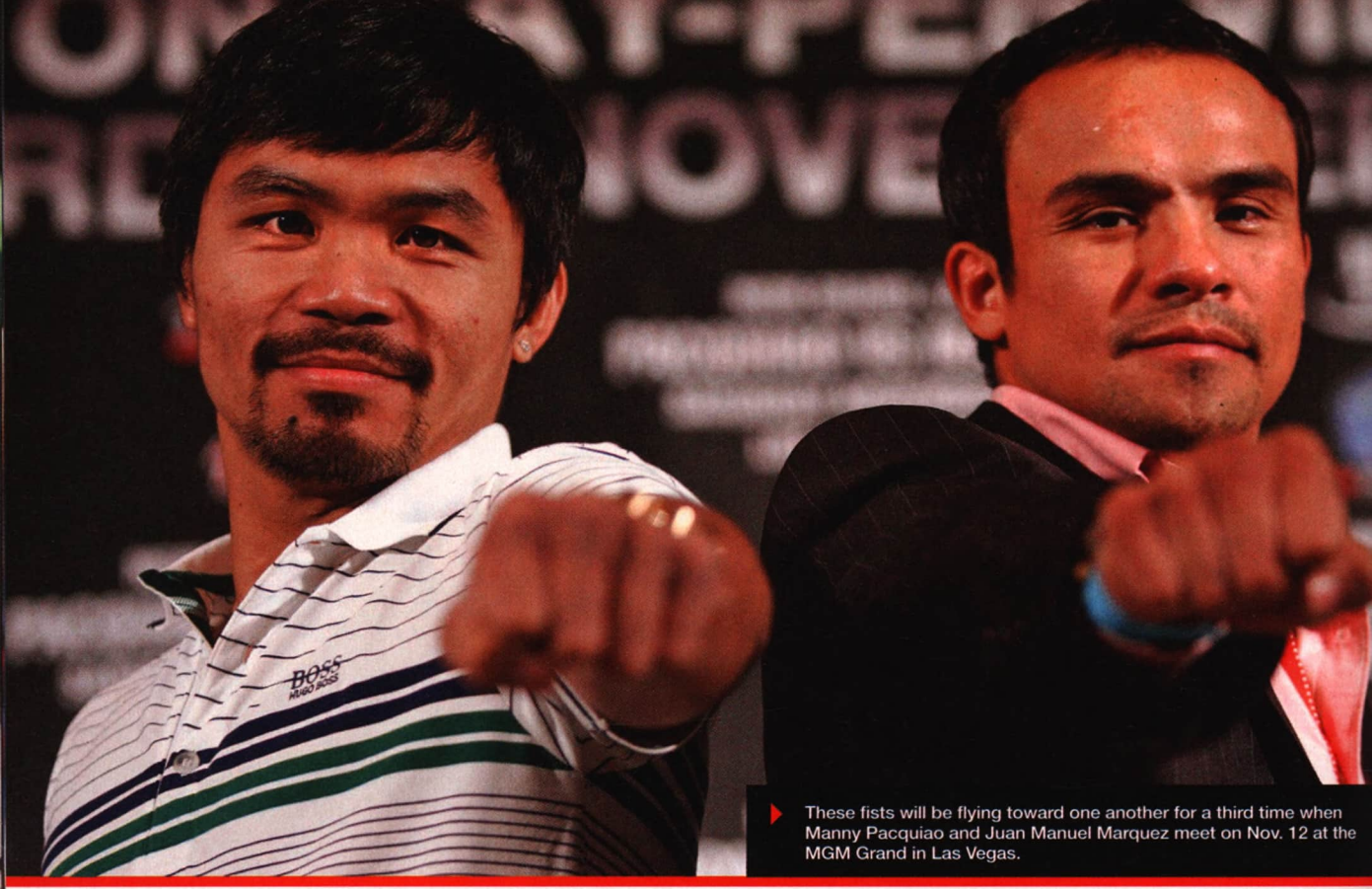

These fists will be flying toward one another for a third time when Manny Pacquiao and Juan Manuel Marquez meet on Nov. 12 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

MANNY PACQUIAO VS. JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ

MAIN EVENT / 12 ROUNDS / THE RUBBER MATCH

WORDS: **DOUG FISCHER** / IMAGES: **NAOKI FUKUDA / CHRIS COZZONE / FIGHTWIRE**

MARQUEZ HAS PROVEN THE ABILITY TO GIVE PACQUIAO HELL, AND FANS WANT TO SEE IF HE CAN DO IT AGAIN.

The public demand for a third bout between Manny Pacquiao and Juan Manuel Marquez never ceased, even when the Filipino icon left the lighter divisions in search of larger prey.

Fans clamored for Pacquiao-Marquez III even as the Pac-Man won major titles at 140, 147 and 154 pounds, further separating him from his Mexican rival, who remained at 135 pounds where he reigned as champion.

The reason for the demand is simple: Pacquiao has yet to be challenged in the heavier weight classes. The bigger and stronger that Pacquiao's opponents appeared, the more the southpaw dynamo dominated them once the bell rang.

Oscar De La Hoya. Ricky Hatton. Miguel Cotto. Joshua Clottey. Antonio Margarito. Shane Mosley. Pacquiao vanquished them all so easily fans began to forget what it was like for the Filipino star to be in a real fight. Then they remembered Marquez. He gave Pacquiao a fight. He almost beat Pacquiao -- twice. Never mind the fact that Marquez has had to fight harder to win his bouts at 135 pounds in recent years or that he was dominated by Floyd Mayweather Jr. during his one fight in the welterweight division.

Marquez has proven the ability to give Pacquiao hell, and fans want to see if he can do it again. The third match, on Nov. 12 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, will either prove the old boxing adage "styles make fights" or support a basic rule of most professional sports, that "size matters." But it had to happen.

RECORD AND WORLD RATING

MARQUEZ

Is 53-5-1 with 39 knockouts. ... Turned pro with a first-round disqualification loss to Javier Duran in May 1993 ... Won next six bouts before making U.S. debut in Las Vegas in late '94 ... Quickly made name for himself while fighting in Southern California in '95 and '96 ... Broke into world ratings with dominant decision over Agapito Sanchez in '97 .... Counter-punching style and sharp technique scared away top featherweights of the late '90s, including champ Naseem Hamed and fellow Mexican standouts Marco Antonio Barrera and Erik Morales ... Suffered setback when he lost decision to unbeaten titleholder Freddie Norwood in '99 ... Rebounded with 13 consecutive victories, including IBF and WBA title-winning TKOs of Manuel Medina and Derrick Gainer ... Title belts led to first showdown with Pacquiao in 2004 ... Got up from three first-round knockdowns to outbox Filipino powerhouse over 12 intense rounds, earning draw ... Turned down immediate rematch with Pacquiao and went from No. 1-rated featherweight to instant "has-been" when an ill-advised trip to Indonesia resulted in a controversial loss to Chris John in '06 ... Came back more dedicated and a lot scrappier, stopping Terdsak Kokietgym and Jimrex Jaca before getting the break of his career, a 130-pound title shot against Barrera, whom he defeated by unanimous decision in '07 ... Lost title to Pacquiao via controversial split decision in sensational rematch in '08 ... Won RING lightweight title with 11th-round TKO of Joel Casamayor later that year ... Defended 135-pound with ninth-round TKO of Juan Diaz in THE RING's Fight of the Year for 2009 ... Lost one-sided decision to Mayweather in welterweight bout later that year ... Dropped back down to lightweight and defended title against Diaz and Michael Katisids in Fight of the Year candidate for 2011 ... Is currently *THE RING* lightweight champion.

PACQUIAO

Is 53-3-2 with 38 knockouts ... Turned pro in January 1996 at age 16 in the junior flyweight division ... Suffered a third-round KO to Rustico Torrecampo in 12th pro bout in '96 ... Won 12 consecutive bouts (11 by stoppage) before scoring an eighth-round TKO of highly regarded Chatchai Sasakul for the WBC flyweight title in a huge upset in '98 ... lost 112-pound belt on the scales prior to being stopped by Medgoen Singsurat in '99 and wasn't expected to ever contend for another title ... However, jumped north 10 pounds to the junior featherweight division, where he rang off six KO victories before teaming up with Freddie Roach in America ... Won second major title, the IBF junior featherweight belt, with sixth-round KO upset of Lehlohonolo Ledwaba in 2001 under new coach ... Union with Roach led to unprecedented success over past decade as the dynamic duo earned major titles at featherweight, junior lightweight, lightweight, junior welterweight, welterweight and junior middleweight ... Is rated No. 1 at welterweight and pound-for-pound by *THE RING*.

AGE AND PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT

MARQUEZ

Is a well-preserved 38 years old ... Stands 5-foot-7 with a 67-inch reach ... Extremely well-conditioned ... Perfectly proportioned (for a featherweight or lightweight) ... Possesses excellent form and balance ... Chin and recuperative ability are world class ... Facial tissue, especially around his eyes and mouth, tend to cut and swell.

PACQUIAO

Is 33 years old ... Stands 5-foot-6½ with a 66½-inch reach ... Elite-level athlete ... Entire body is a powerful quick-twitch muscle, complete with phenomenal hand speed, quick feet and bone-jarring power ... Is well coordinated ... Has solid whiskers ... Facial tissue tends to bruise easily.

BEST WEAPONS

MARQUEZ

Sharp, tactical mind is greatest asset ... Money punch is a well-timed straight right ... Uppercut (both left and right) is extremely damaging ... Surgical jab sets up hooks (to body and head) and near-perfect combinations for which he's known.

PACQUIAO

Once a one-armed bandit, now every punch in his arsenal is potent ... Straight left is still most devastating shot ... Right hook is also dangerous and helps set up left cross ... Jab can be shotgunned or used to feint opponents off balance.

PREVIOUS FIGHT

MARQUEZ

Knocked out unheralded Likar Ramos in the first round of a junior welterweight bout July 16 in Cancun, Mexico.

PACQUIAO

Not only dominated but *embarrassed* Mosley, who shamelessly avoided confrontation after getting decked in the third round, en route to an uneventful decision victory May 7 in Las Vegas.

QUALITY OF OPPOSITION

MARQUEZ

Has faced the best of fighters of three divisions – those who were willing to fight him – including 13 titleholders ... Has fought three first-ballot Hall of Famers, Barrera (UD 12), Pacquiao (Draw 12, L 12) and Mayweather (L 12), and one borderline case, Casmayor (TKO 11), among the many hardnosed contenders and difficult stylists during his 18-year career.

PACQUIAO

Has the resume of an all-time great due to victories over 15 fighters who have held major titles, including five certain future Hall of Famers, Marquez (SD 12, Draw 12), Barrera (TKO 11, UD 12), Morales (L 12, TKO 10, TKO 3), De La Hoya (TKO 8) and Mosley (UD 12) ... Record against the great Mexican trio of Marquez, Barrera and Morales is an astounding 5-1-1, which includes 10 knockdowns .... Other victims include two borderline Hall of Famers, Ricky Hatton (KO 2) and Miguel Cotto (TKO 12) ... Victories over Ledwaba (TKO 6) and Sasakul (TKO 8), who were THE RING's No. 1-rated fighters in their divisions when he faced them, are also impressive.

DEFENSE

MARQUEZ

Offense has become his defense in recent years, hence his ring wars with Diaz in '09 and Katsidis last year as well as the knockdowns he suffered against Barrera, Pacquiao, Mayweather and Katsidis.

PACQUIAO

His ability to avoid punches has improved in recent years as he's added lateral and upper-body movement to his attack ... Gaining a measure of patience and fighting in a less impetuous manner has also made him harder to hit.

STYLE

MARQUEZ

Has changed style from cautious counter-puncher to aggressive, combination-punching technician ... Is easier to hit than he was at featherweight, but has become one of the best offensive fighters in the sport.

PACQUIAO

Has evolved into an explosive but versatile boxer-puncher ... Can counter punch with frightening power, stalk and punish or employ stick-and-move tactics that gradually break opponents down with brutal efficiency.

THE QUESTIONS

MARQUEZ

Can he fight effectively above 135 pounds? Will he be able to withstand Pacquiao's power, which has battered and humbled much bigger fighters? Can he still outbox Pacquiao now that his rival's skill and technique have improved?

PACQUIAO

Is recent run a mirage? Did he catch faded veterans at the right time? Was he just too fast and active against naturally bigger opponents, who are also considerably slower? Will Marquez's counter-punching ability always trouble him?

THE OUTCOME

Pacquiao will allow Marquez to take the initiative in the early rounds until he catches – and hurts – the master counter puncher with a counter punch. Unlike Cotto and Mosley, who refused to engage Pacquiao after being dropped early in their fights, Marquez will let his hands go. The two rivals will battle toe to toe with Marquez getting the worst of it. Marquez's warrior's heart will keep him in the fight but the referee or his corner will stop the bout by the late rounds to spare him undue punishment.

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WHAT KILLED ARTURO GATTI?

THOSE CLOSE TO THE FIGHTER WILL NEVER BELIEVE THAT HE TOOK HIS OWN LIFE

WORDS: **RON BORGES** / IMAGES: **ED MULHOLLAND / FIGHTWIRE IMAGES / AL BELLO / GETTY IMAGES**

Arturo Gatti was the kind of boxer who said he would fight to the death. If you knew him you didn't doubt it. As things have turned out, he's fighting after it, too.

Gatti died under mysterious and tragic circumstances two years ago, the victim of either a suicide or a homicide. That we still don't know for sure makes obvious how bizarre the ending of his life was and why the fight over it continues – and over the multi-million dollar estate he left behind.

Relatives fighting over a dead man's money is hardly new. It goes back to Cain and Abel. What makes Gatti's story so troubling is that his family believes it was his wife who either killed him or had him murdered, and furthermore, that she tearfully professes her innocence even as she's locked in a civil court case in Canada designed to keep any of Gatti's hard-earned blood money from going to his 5-year-old daughter by another woman.

Amanda Rodrigues, Gatti's 25-year-old wife and a woman to whom he signed over his entire estate only three weeks before he was found dead on the kitchen floor of a condo at a seaside resort in Brazil, is hardly a sympathetic character. A foul-mouthed, Brazilian-born stripper when Gatti met her, they married in 2007, not long after his retirement from boxing following the ninth and final loss in a career in which he often bled for his money. In that last fight, he bled plenty.

Boxing, or at least his approach to it, made Gatti a cult hero. He was a fighter whose heart was bigger than his talent. His cavalier approach to pain and his ability to ignore it helped him rise well above the limits of his skills.

Gatti won two world titles, was involved in a trilogy of ring wars with Micky Ward that became the stuff of legend and reached iconic status as a result of the many times he came back from desperate circumstances to win. His many triumphs took him to the bank with millions, but often not before a stop at the emergency room. He was the last guy anyone would have expected to take his own life.

That is why, two years after his passing, his loyal manager, Pat Lynch, funded a 10-month private investigation into the mysterious circumstances of his death. The conclusion at which the team of investigators and forensic pathologists arrived was made public in September and they did not surprise Lynch. "This was a homicide, Arturo Gatti was murdered," said lead investigator, Joseph M. Moura, at a press conference announcing the 300-page report's findings. "Arturo Gatti did not commit suicide."

"THIS WAS A HOMICIDE, ARTURO GATTI WAS MURDERED, ARTURO GATTI DID NOT COMMIT SUICIDE."

After traveling to Brazil, recreating the crime scene, interviewing witnesses and studying the physical evidence, the team of investigators concluded the purse strap Gatti allegedly used to hang himself in a condo he and his wife were renting in Porto de Galinhas was neither long enough to wrap around his 18-inch neck, nor strong enough to support his weight. Brazilian police, who originally arrested Rodrigues on murder charges before releasing her 18 days later and labeling the death a suicide, concluded he was just a broken down ex-fighter distraught over the dissolution of his brief marriage and the possible loss of his infant son to the dark world of divorce.

Police admitted, however, that the circumstances were suspect. There was no sign of forced entry and only Rodrigues and the couple's 10-month old son were allegedly in the apartment with Gatti. They found witnesses who claimed Gatti struck his wife during a heated argument at a bar earlier in the evening, and Rodrigues claimed that while she saw her husband on the floor around 6 a.m. when she came down to make a bottle for the baby, she did not notice the pool of blood around his head until 9:30.

"It is still too early to say anything concrete although it is all very strange," Brazilian police investigator Edilson Alves said at the time. Two years later people are still saying the same thing.

"In my opinion he was attacked by another person that resulted in a blunt force laceration to the back of his head and then he was strangled (with the purse strap)," forensic scientist Brent E. Turvey said. "He died in the location where he was found."

The motive for murder, if one was committed, was the eternal one: money. The estimated value of the former WBC junior welterweight and IBF super featherweight champion's estate is around $6 million, all of it going to his wife as the result of a will executed barely three

GATTI TIMELINE

2009

JULY 9 – Gatti is found dead around 6 a.m. in a rented apartment in the seaside resort of Porto de Galihnas in northeastern Brazil. Police say he was strangled with a purse strap, although blood also was found at the scene. Gatti reportedly had arrived there with his wife, Amanda Rodrigues, and 10-month-old son the day before. His wife is detained by police.

JULY 12 – Brazilian authorities formally accuse Amanda Rodrigues of murdering her husband, although they stop short of charging her. Rodrigues says she and Gatti had argued the previous night but denies playing any role in her husband's death. She reportedly was in the house for 10 hours without noticing the body.

JULY 13 – Police investigators are operating under the assumption that Rodrigues acted alone when she allegedly strangled her drunken husband in his sleep. Her attorney says she wasn't big enough to kill a man as strong as Gatti.

JULY 14 – Rodrigues' attorney petitions for her release from jail while the investigation continues. A ruling is expected the following day.

JULY 15 – Rodrigues' says in a letter to The Associated Press that she is innocent and loved

weeks before his death. Lynch has always suspected Rodriques, dismissing the idea of suicide as "ridiculous."

"No one is going to convince me Arturo took his own life," Lynch said. "I just wanted to find out what happened that night."

Lynch financed the investigation but his doubts came immediately after first learning Gatti was found dead on July 11, 2007 with a thick purse strap wrapped around his neck, laying in a heap on a blood-covered kitchen floor in his underwear.

The autopsy done in Brazil has been called fatally flawed by the independent investigation and a second one was conducted in Canada at the insistence of the family. According to Michael Baden, former chief pathologist for the New York state police and host of the HBO show "Autopsy," who observed it as a family representative, the Canadian coroners did not rule out homicide. That, of course, is not the same as saying Gatti was murdered.

Among the members of Lynch's investigative team was forensic pathologist Cyril Wecht. Wecht has investigated the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King and is a nationally recognized expert in the field. He found the Brazilian autopsy so badly done it may have been intentionally botched, and concluded Gatti was murdered.

If he was, the reason why is obvious. Gatti signed a new will three weeks before his death that not only turned his entire estate over to Rodriques but specifically excluded his daughter by the other woman, according to a notary who testified in the Canadian case.

That will overrides one his family claimed he signed in 2007 that turned his estate over to his mother and his young daughter. Although no signed copy of that will has been found, the family claims he would have certainly provided for his daughter, Sophia, who he had with a former fiancée. A wrongful death suit on her behalf has been filed in New Jersey and a judge there froze $2 million in Gatti's assets held in the United States just as the civil suit in Canada began in Montreal.

her husband.

JULY 18 – A Brazilian newspaper reports that an autopsy was inconclusive, meaning it was possible that Gatti committed suicide.

JULY 19 – Those close to Gatti attend his wake in Montreal, where the Italian-born fighter was raised.

JULY 20 – More than 1,000 attend Gatti's funeral in Montreal.

JULY 30 – Brazilian authorities rule that Gatti committed suicide and his wife is released from jail. The police will provide no further information but a judge told The Associated Press: "The victim took his own life, committing suicide by hanging (from a staircase)." Rodrigues says he might've killed himself for fear of losing her after their argument, during which she says Gatti pushed her down.

JULY 30 – More than 600 attend a memorial for Gatti in New Jersey, where he lived since he was a teenager.

JULY 31 – Gatti's body is exhumed at his family's request so a Canadian coroner can perform a second autopsy. Many of those close to Gatti don't believe that he committed suicide.

In court papers filed in the New Jersey case the claim is made that Rodrigues "did violently bludgeon and asphyxiate the decedent resulting in his death." Private investigator Paul J. Ciolino does not disagree.

At a press conference at the Global Boxing Gym in North Bergen, N.J., called to announce the investigative team's findings, he asked a question to which no one has the answer.

"If she was alone (when Gatti died), who committed the homicide?" he said. "He was murdered because he had some dough. It's the oldest motive in the world. Amanda makes Anna Nicole Smith look like June Cleaver."

While it seems sure that Beaver Cleaver's mom would never be embroiled in such a tale, finding feisty Amada Rodrigues here seems to come as no surprise to some who claim to know her.

Witnesses during the Canadian trial testified she once gave Gatti a black eye and two friends of the Gatti family – Marisa and Gisela Minero – testified that after having dinner with Rodrigues in November 2008, they returned to the penthouse she shared with Gatti as she received a text from her husband. According to Gisela Minero, "She snapped."

"She said 'If he thinks his exes were bitches, I'll show him," Minero testified. "I'm going to be the biggest bitch. I'm going to kill him."

Marisa Minero testified Rodrigues was highly critical of his family, claiming when he died they'd all be fighting over his money. Minero testified she was so put off by what she described as her "diva behavior' that she vowed not to see her again. That was only seven months before Gatti's death.

According to Gatti's long-time friend and business partner, Antonio Rizzo, Gatti never read contracts and had an eighth grade education that would have precluded him from understanding the new will even if he read it. He also claimed Gatti adamantly told him he did not want to leave his estate to his wife, who he was allegedly preparing to divorce at the time of his death.

Kathryn Appello, the secretary to Gatti's attorney, testified the couple came into her office several months after they were married

GATTI TIMELINE

AUG. 1 – A second autopsy, conducted by a Canadian coroner, does not rule out homicide. Michael Baden, a former police pathologist and host of the TV show, "Autopsy," says the Brazilian investigation is incomplete.

AUG. 3 – The coroner's office in Quebec asks authorities in Brazil to share the files from the initial autopsy. A spokeswoman says a report on the second autopsy would not be issued until the Brazilian records are reviewed.

AUG. 13 – Rodrigues says the second autopsy will provide conclusive evidence that she did not kill Gatti.

NOV. 5 – Rodrigues, in a legal battled with Gatti's family over an estate valued at more than $5 million, receives $37,500 to cover legal and child-care fees.

2010

APRIL 3 – Rodrigues receives $100,000 to cover legal fees and $2,000 each month for childcare from Gatti's estate.

2011

AUG. 10 – Gatti's former manager, Pat Lynch, says that a private investigation will disprove the contention of Brazilian authorities that the fighter committed suicide. Paul Ciolino, the investigator hired by Lynch 10 months earlier, tells The Associated Press that the initial investigation was "inadequate and downright incompetent."

SEPT. 6 – A civil trial over Gatti's estate begins in Montreal. A notary who helped Gatti and his

and asked for a copy of a pre-nuptial agreement Rodrigues signed that left her with nothing if they divorced. Gatti tore the document up but then winked at Appello. According to her, Gatti called a week later to be sure she still had the original.

In May 2009, Appello said Gatti asked her to fax a copy of the pre-nup to a divorce lawyer in Montreal. Gatti's family claims he was pressured into signing a new will a month later, but a notary present at the time denied that under oath.

Rodrigues' attorney, Pierre-Hugues Fortin, established that she had called the police on March 24, 2009, which led to Gatti's arrest on domestic violence charges. Gatti was ordered to stop drinking and stay away from his wife but violated that order less than three weeks later when he was arrested at a strip joint.

On the day of his death, testimony claimed he hit Rodrigues in front of numerous witnesses after both had been drinking heavily and arguing. The next morning he was dead.

Rodrigues has consistently denied any involvement in Gatti's death. She testified in Quebec Superior Court that she had grown weary of Gatti's drinking, noting that after a bout in a bar at the Ritz Carlton in Hawaii on their honeymoon they fought and the police were called. Both were taken into custody and, according to the police report, Rodrigues was unstable on her feet and verbally abusive to the police.

Only a month before Gatti's death, Rodrigues tearfully admitted in court that she'd keyed the side of Gatti's car.

"I was being not nice at the time," she testified. "I know I was not a perfect wife. I could have been better. I did a lot of bad things."

While it is difficult to say with certainty how the last, losing battle of Arturo Gatti's life ended, one long-time friend believes at least one person knows.

"SHE SAID 'IF HE THINKS HIS EXES WERE BITCHES, I'LL SHOW HIM. **I'M GOING TO BE THE BIGGEST BITCH. I'M GOING TO KILL HIM.'"**

– GISELA MINERO, QUOTING GATTI'S WIFE IN TESTIMONY

"I think she knows what happened," says Ward, who began his relationship with Gatti in hand-to-hand combat but after 30 rounds of sharing hell with him became a close friend until his death. "I just want to see his estate go to where it should go – his kids, his mom. I don't want her to get it if she had something to do with this. I don't think she did it personally but I think she had something to do with it."

When the actor Chuck Zito called to tell Ward that Gatti was dead, disbelief was his first emotion, followed by a haunting sense of a loss he cannot shake.

"You can't understand the way we felt about each other unless you go through it," Ward said of a bond built from mingled blood and a shared willingness to endure pain in pursuit of victory. "It's like war on a smaller scale. You did it, and you both came through it. We had a very strong respect for each other. We could shake hands and then try to take each other's head off. We both had it in us to fight. I didn't have to hate him to want to hurt him. It sounds barbaric, but we were both just trying to win.

"If I had to put him into the hospital to win, that's what I did. If he had to put me in the hospital to win, that's what he did. The third fight we both ended up in there."

Barely an hour after beating each other until both needed to be

wife draft a new will shortly before his death says the fighter was not pressured to sign it. Gatti's lawyers claim he didn't understand what he was signing, meaning a previous will should be considered valid.

SEPT. 7 – A team of forensic evidence experts hired by Gatti's manager conclude after a 10-month investigation that the figher was murdered, contradicting Brazilian authorities' ruling that Gatti committed suicide. The results of the investigation are to be translated into Portuguese and sent to Brazil. "This case must be reopened if authorities in Brazil have an iota of moral, ethical and legal concern for their reputation," forensic pathologist Cyril Wecht tells The Associated Press. Among the conclusions in the latest investigation: A laceration caused by a blunt instrument could've incapacitated him before he was strangled; hand towels soaked in blood were never tested by Brazilian investigators; and the purse strap was neither long enough nor strong enough to have hanged Gatti. Rodrigues wasn't directly accused of murdering her husband but investigators hinted at that. "If she was there alone, who committed the homicide?" investigator Paul Ciolino tells The AP. "He was murdered because he had some dough. It's the oldest motive in the world."

SEPT. 9 – The official who oversaw the 2009 investigation into the death of Gatti remains convinced that the fighter committed suicide but says he'd be willing to re-examine the case based on the findings of the subsequent investigation. Meanwhile, the attorney of Gatti's 5-year-old daughter files a wrongful death lawsuit against Rodrigues seeking damages and restraints on Gatti's assets. Rodrigues is not

taken to an emergency room in Atlantic City, N.J., for considerably more than flesh wounds, they lay side by side on two gurneys. Only a thin curtain separated them. Both had IVs, bruises, swollen eyes and smiles. They lay there joking with each other until Ward was released around 3 a.m.

Gatti had to stay behind, his broken hand not yet in a cast. They hugged as Ward pressed a handful of his pain killers into his friend's hand, the only help he could give him. As Ward shuffled to the door, Gatti said, "You be careful out there. I love you."

"I love you, too," Ward replied.

It may sound odd, this juxtaposition of love and violence, but it was the bond between them and it grew in the years after that third fight to the point where Ward remains almost unable to believe his friend is gone.

"He always said I was him and he was me," Ward said. "Just today I went online, and I was looking at him. It gave me chills. I just wanted to hear his voice.

"I liked the way he fought as hard as he could. He wasn't a punk. I used to call him 'Jason' because you couldn't kill him. I guess he's not Jason. The kid couldn't get up this time."

Two years after his death that, sadly, is the only thing we know for sure about Arturo Gatti's last hours. ■

GATTI TIMELINE

the mother of the girl.

Sept. 14 – A judge in the civil trial over Gatti's estate suggests that Rodrigues agree to a settlement with the fighter's family but she refuses. The judge says the legal wrangling could consume Gatti's fortune. "The way things are looking, there will probably be no money left for either party by the end of all the legal procedures," Justice Claudine Roy tells The AP.

Sept. 15 – It is revealed that a prenuptial agreement would've left Rodrigues with nothing had the couple divorced. Gatti apparently insisted on the agreement but later destroyed a copy to prove his love for Rodrigues. However, the original document still exists.

Sept. 16 – Rodrigues gives tearful testimony in her third day on the stand in the civil trial in Montreal. She is asked why she wouldn't allow Gatti's family to see the couple's son, Arturo Jr. She says she feared they would take him from her because of the acrimony surrounding the case.

Judge Chuck Giampa had Julio Cesar Chavez winning before he stopped Meldrick Taylor with two seconds remaining in their first fight. The other two judges had Taylor winning by a large margin.

HOW CAN JUDGES SCORE THE SAME FIGHT SO DIFFERENTLY?

WORDS: **CHUCK GIAMPA** IMAGES: **AL BELLO / ALLSPORT / GETTY**

I have often been asked how judges at the same fight can score it completely differently. There are several reasons.

One is that the each judge sits at a different side of the ring. Many times one judge might be blocked from seeing the action since he is looking at the back of the fighter. A judge can score only what he sees. It happened to me while I was one of the judges in the Mike Tyson-Evander Holyfield "Bite Fight." At the time of the bite, the fighters were in a position where Tyson's back was to me and Holyfield was facing me. What looked like a clash of heads to me was actually the moment when Tyson bit Holyfield's ear. It was only when Holyfield went to his corner bleeding from his ear that his cornermen declared he had been bitten.

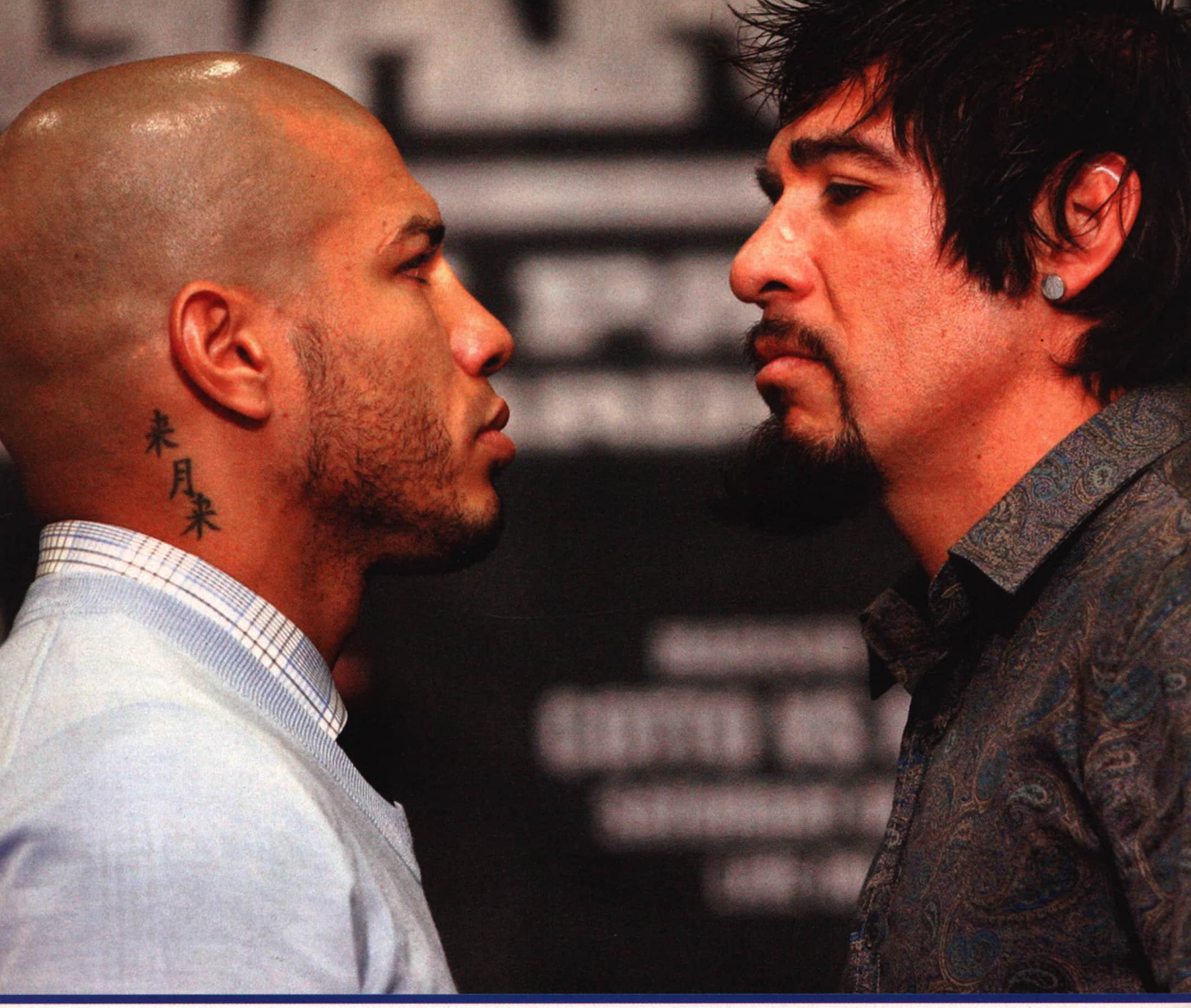
Another reason is a lack of experience or proper training of judges. Most professional boxing judges break into officiating by volunteering their time in the amateurs. However, the rules in amateur boxing are completely different from the rules in professional boxing. For example, when I started in the amateurs in 1980, a knockdown was scored the same as any punch. And the referee could stop a fight after a boxer received one solid punch if the referee thought the boxer was hurt.

In professional boxing, we emphasize effective punches landed – giving knockdowns more weight – more than the number of punches landed. That's the reason I stopped judging amateur boxing when I became a professional boxing judge in 1984. I didn't want to bring the philosophy of amateur scoring to professional boxing.

Another possible reason for conflicting scores in the same fight is the philosophy of the judges. I had such an experience in the Julio Cesar Chavez-Meldrick Taylor fight in 1990. At the end of 11 rounds, the scores were 107-102 for Taylor by Dave Moretti; 108-101 for Taylor by Jerry Roth and 105-104 for Chavez on my scorecard. Since referee Richard Steele stopped the fight with two seconds remaining in the 12th round, the scores weren't a factor in the final outcome.

However, I did receive much criticism at that time in the media for having Chavez winning by a point after 11 rounds. After reviewing the tape of the fight with the Nevada State Athletic Commission Executive Director Chuck Minker, he stated that he understood that I gave more credit to the effective punching by Chavez rather than the boxing skills of Taylor, which was my philosophy.

In light of the decline of Taylor's skills and his current medical condition, I've been told recently by TV commentators who initially criticized my score that I saw something happening in that fight that they didn't see at that time. They were impressed by the boxing skills of Taylor and didn't give Chavez credit for the effect his punches had on Taylor. ■



IN SEARCH OF REDEMPTION

MIGUEL COTTO AND ANTONIO MARGARITO BOTH HAVE EXTRA MOTIVATION FOR THEIR PAY-PER-VIEW REMATCH ON DEC. 3

WORDS: **DOUG FISCHER** / IMAGES: **CHRIS FARINA / TOP RANK**

Miguel Cotto believes he's a better fighter than Antonio Margarito, and the junior middleweight titleholder says he will prove it in a fair fight, which their rematch on Dec. 3 in New York City will undoubtedly be. Margarito, who won their first encounter with a stirring-but-questionable 11th-round stoppage in July 2008, just wants to prove that he can still fight.

The loss to Margarito is clearly a sore spot for Cotto, who, after suffering a 12th-round TKO to Manny Pacquiao, rebounded to win the WBA 154-pound title – his third major title in as many weight classes -- from Yuri Foreman last June. He successfully defended the belt against Ricardo Mayorga in March.

However, the 30-year-old Puerto Rican star stops short of accusing Margarito of cheating, even though the Mexican was caught attempting to load his hand wraps prior to fighting Shane Mosley in 2009.

"A lot of things are in the air with the first

fight. People are asking a lot of questions about the wraps, and I want to clear that up," Cotto told RingTV.com when asked why the rematch is important to him.

Cotto (36-2, 29 knockouts) believes his team is at least partially to blame for the questionable nature of the first fight, which took place in Las Vegas, where Nevada State Athletic Commission inspectors cleared Margarito's wraps without the presence of a Cotto representative.

"We committed a huge mistake in 2008, we didn't send anybody to his locker room to watch the hand-wrap process," Cotto said. "That won't happen this time. This time we'll make sure everything is legal with the wraps. This time it will be different."

Emanuel Steward trained Cotto for the back-to-back stoppages of Foreman (TKO 9) and Mayorga (TKO 12). In doing so, the hall-of-fame trainer tweaked Cotto's style and technique in a way that led to two of the fighter's better performances in recent years.

The two have since parted ways – with Jose Luis Diaz of Cuba replacing Steward – but Cotto benefitted from Steward's presence.

"Everybody has seen the (improvements) in my last two fights," Cotto said. "... I boxed better, I looked better, and I won both fights."

Margarito (38-7, 27 KOs), who hired respected young trainer Robert Garcia after the Mosley debacle, may have a different coach for the rematch, but his approach to fighting Cotto hasn't changed.

He's just going to take it to the Puerto Rican with relentless pressure and lots of punches. The 33-year-old Tijuana resident will hold his camp in the 14,000-foot elevations of the Otomi Mountains outside of Mexico City to ensure that he has the stamina to carry out his punishing intentions.

"Antonio knows what he has to do to beat Cotto again," Margarito's co-manager Sergio Diaz told RingTV.com. "He says he wants to break his own punch-stat record that he set against Clottey in this fight."

Margarito should have more on his mind than punch stats going into this high-profile rematch, though. The Mexican mauler could have a shot at redeeming his soiled name if he can beat Cotto again. He may even be able to jump-start his career, which has been mostly downhill since he beat his Puerto Rican rival.

Mosley, a 3-to-1 underdog, knocked him out in the ninth round of a one-sided fight. His boxing license was revoked a few weeks later. He was viewed as a pariah during the year and half he was barred from fighting in the U.S. And then he was brutally beat down by Pacquiao, who badly fractured the orbital bone to his right eye en route to a near-shutout decision.

The eye injury almost cost Margarito his career. He still couldn't see well out of his right eye months after an operation removed optical nerves and muscle from the fracture before sealing it up.

It was later discovered that he suffered from severe cataracts. Margarito began to contemplate retirement when he was told that any surgery on the eye would spell the end of his fighting days. However, Margarito's promoter, Bob Arum, referred the fighter to the same eye specialist he uses. This doctor not only eliminated Margarito's cataracts with artificial lens replacement surgery, but also said he would be able to fight by the end of the year.

The surgery and near retirement has Margarito thinking that every fight could be his last.

"It's only one fight at a time from now on," he told RingTV.com through Diaz. "I can't think about what people say about me or my hand wraps. I can't take that kind of talk into my fight camp. I know I'm a clean fighter. I don't have to prove it with this fight.

"My incentive for this fight is the title that Cotto holds and to prove to myself that I can continue fighting."

But Cotto doesn't believe Margarito isn't thinking about the hand-wrap scandal going into their rematch, which will be televised on HBO Pay-Per-View.

"That's the biggest reason he took this fight," Cotto said. "He thinks he can clear his name, but he has no chance against me this time." ■

"WE COMMITTED A HUGE MISTAKE IN 2008, WE DIDN'T SEND ANYBODY TO HIS LOCKER ROOM TO WATCH THE HAND-WRAP PROCESS. THAT WON'T HAPPEN THIS TIME. THIS TIME WE'LL MAKE SURE EVERYTHING IS LEGAL WITH THE WRAPS. THIS TIME IT WILL BE DIFFERENT."

Boxers Organizing Committee (BOC)

Paul Johnson
Executive Director
4042 88th Lane NE
Blaine, MN 55014
763-438-2447
www.boxers.org
johnson4042@aol.com

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"Boxers must be part of the equation."
— José Chegüi Torres

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications) (Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685): 1. Publication Title: The Ring; 2. Publication Number: 0035-5410; 3. Filing Date: 08/31/2011; 4. Issue Frequency: Monthly 5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 12; 6. Annual Subscription Price: $53.70; 7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication: 510 Township Line Road, Suite 1030, Blue Bell, PA 19422; 8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher: 510 Township Line Road, Suite 130, Blue Bell, PA 19422; 9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor and Managing Editor: Publisher N/A Editor: Nigel Collins, 510 Township Line Road, Suite 101, Blue Bell, PA 19422; Managing Editor: Joseph Santoliquito, 510 Township Line Road, Suite 101, Blue Bell, PA 19422; 10. Owner: Oscar De La Hoya, Sports & Entertainment Publications, LLC, 510 Township Line Road, Suite 130, Blue Bell, PA 19422; 11. Known Bondholders, Mortgages, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: None; 12. N/A; 13. Publication Title: The Ring; 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data: June 2011; 15. Average No. Copies Each Issue During the Preceding 12 Months: a. Total Number of copies (net press run): **54,603**; b. Paid Circulation (by mail and outside the mail); (1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof and exchange copies): **6,089**; (3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®:**12,358**; (4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g. First Class Mail)®: **532**; c. Total Paid Distribution: **18,979**; d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail or Outside the Mail); (1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies included on PS Form 3541: **61**; (4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means): **59**; e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution: **120**; f. Total Distribution: **19,099**; g. Copies not Distributed: **35,504**; h. Total: **54,603**; i. Percent Paid: **99.3%**; No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to the Filing Date: a. Total Number of Copies (net press run): **49,002**; b. Paid Circulation (by mail and outside the mail); (1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies): **6,321**; (3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®: **12,406**; (4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g. First Class Mail)®: **516**; c. Total Paid Distribution: **19,243**; d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail); (1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies included on Form 3541: **57**; (4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside Mail (Carriers or other means): **50**; e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution: **107**; f. Total Distribution: **19,350**; g. Copies not Distributed: **29,652**; h. Total: **49,002**; i. Percent Paid: **99.4%**. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subjected to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including penalties). Nigel Collins, Editor.

Miguel Cotto took a beating against Antonio Margarito in their 2008 meeting.

ANTONIO MARGARITO VS. MIGUEL COTTO

MAIN EVENT / 12 ROUNDS / THE RUBBER MATCH

WORDS: **ERIC RASKIN** / IMAGES: **CHRIS COZZONE / FIGHTWIRE IMAGES**

What exactly happened when Antonio Margarito and Miguel Cotto fought each other on July 26, 2008 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas? We know what our eyes saw at the time: Cotto boxing beautifully for half of a fight, only to wilt under Margarito's unrelenting pressure and surrender his perfect record in the 11th round. But what really caused Cotto to come undone? Was it Margarito's physical superiority? Or was there something in the Mexican's gloves that shouldn't have been there?

In the dressing room prior to his next fight, Margarito's trainer, Javier Capetillo, was busted trying to insert hardened pads into Margarito's hand wraps. Many of Margarito's best wins suddenly developed asterisks. And none appeared more suspicious than the Cotto beatdown.

We might never know exactly what Margarito hit Cotto with that night. But when they meet again on Dec. 3 at Madison Square Garden, we should get an indication. If Margarito repeats his victory, it could serve to suggest that he won fair and square the first time. If Cotto walks through his punches the second time around, it perpetuates the belief that he got scammed back in '08.

Much has happened since their first fight, including brutal beatdowns from Manny Pacquiao for each man. So 2011 isn't an entirely accurate barometer for what should have happened in 2008. But it's the closest we're going to get. Clean or not, it was a sensational fight the first time. Hopefully, the rematch will provide similar thrills – and a glimpse of where the truth lies.

Miguel Cotto celebrated his victory over Ricardo Mayorga. Will it end the same way in his rematch with Antonio Margarito?

RECORD AND WORLD RATING

MARGARITO

Is 38-7 with 27 knockouts and one no-contest ... Ended a brief 18-3 amateur career to turn pro in 1994 at age 15 ... Lost three decisions in his first 12 fights before turning a corner and going undefeated for eight years ... Won a regional welterweight belt against David Kamau (KO 2) in 2000, then beat Antonio Diaz (KO 10) in '02 to claim a vacant 147-pound alphabet title ... Made seven defenses before dropping a decision to Paul Williams in '07, and in the middle of the reign, came up short in a bid for a 154-pound belt against Daniel Santos (Tech. Loss 10) ... Grabbed a welterweight alphabet belt against Kermit Cintron (KO 6) in '08, then took another from Cotto (KO 11) three months later before losing to Shane Mosley (KO by 9) in '09 ... Lost his license for a year due to hand-wrap scandal and lost another year recovering from injuries suffered in 2010 loss to Manny Pacquiao (L 12) ... Is currently unrated by *THE RING*.

COTTO

Is 36-2 with 29 knockouts ... Compiled an amateur record of 125-23, including four Puerto Rican national titles and a first-round loss to eventual gold medalist Muhammad Abdullaev at the 2000 Olympics ... Turned pro in 2001 at the age of 20 ... Won an assortment of regional belts at 140 pounds in '03 and '04 before defeating Kelson Pinto (KO 6) in '04 to claim his first alphabet "world" title ... Made six successful defenses of junior welter strap ... Moved up to welterweight in '06 and defeated Carlos Quintana (KO 5) for a vacant belt, then made four successful defenses before losing to Margarito (KO by 11) in '08 ... Grabbed another vacant trinket in first comeback fight, against Michael Jennings (KO 5), and made one defense before losing to Pacquiao (KO by 12) in '09 ... Moved up to 154 pounds and defeated Yuri Foreman (KO 9) for a belt, which he has defended once ... Is rated No. 1 at junior middleweight by *THE RING*.

AGE AND PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT

MARGARITO

Is 33 years old and showing signs of having slowed down over the past couple of years ... Stands 5-foot-11 with a 73-inch reach ... Is a full-sized junior middle who was reluctant to agree to the 153-pound catch weight ... Somewhat slow of fist but heavy-handed, at least prior to getting caught with loaded wraps ... Recovering from detached retina and broken orbital bone ... Boasts an excellent chin, with just one KO loss on his record.

COTTO

Will be 31 on fight night and, like Margarito, is arguably slowing down ... Stands 5-foot-7 with a 67-inch reach ... Is somewhat small for junior middle, hence the catch weight ... Tends to cut fairly easily ... Has decent speed and above-average power, but isn't off the charts in either category ... Chin has long been a question mark, although the way it crumbled against Margarito is suspect.

BEST WEAPONS

MARGARITO

The fact that he is nearly impossible to deter or discourage is what most sets him up to succeed ... Right cross isn't quite a one-punch knockout weapon, but it does plenty of damage ... Bangs the body with vigor ... Though not particularly fleet of foot, is excellent at using angles to cut off the ring.

COTTO

Left hook, thrown either upstairs or down, is one of the most fluid and effective punches thrown in boxing today ... If there's a better body puncher at 154 than Margarito, it's Cotto ... Has a good, accurate jab when he chooses to use it ... Moves around the ring beautifully. And don't hold it against him that he looked slow of foot against Pacquiao.

Manny Pacquiao used Antonio Margarito's face as a punching bag en route to a one-sided decision on Nov. 13.

BEST WEAPONS

MARGARITO

Took an unholy beating from Pacquiao at Cowboys Stadium, gamely soaking up absurd amounts of punishment from the much faster man while his corner and referee Laurence Cole refused to rescue him ... Both eyes were swollen almost shut by the late rounds, with right eye particularly grisly ... Showed a great chin and tons of heart to last the distance, losing by scores of 120-108, 119-109 and 118-110.

COTTO

Struggled to get into a groove against awkward veteran Ricardo Mayorga in March, but scored a TKO in the final round to put an exclamation point on an uneven performance ... Built a lead of 107-102 on all cards, though it seemed a bit closer than that ... Cracked Mayorga on the jaw in the final round and the Nicaraguan somehow came away claiming an injury to his thumb as he went to the canvas, leading to a stoppage moments later.

QUALITY OF OPPOSITION

MARGARITO

Was once considered the sport's most avoided fighter but has never avoided anyone himself, with five fights on his record against men who've spent time on the pound-for-pound list: a young Sergio Martinez (KO 7), Williams, Cotto, Mosley, and Pacquiao ... Has plenty of experience against the next tier as well, taking on Santos (no-contest 1, technical-decision loss 10), Diaz, Andrew Lewis (KO 2), Sebastian Lujan (KO 10), Cintron (KO 5, KO 6), and Joshua Clottey (W 12).

COTTO

Fought and beat a lot of B-level opposition for the first six years of his career, but it's been mostly A-level (or close to it) for the last four years ... Starting in June '07, faced Zab Judah (KO 11), Mosley (W 12), Margarito (KO by 11), Clottey (W 12), and Pacquiao (KO by 12) ... Notable earlier wins came against Carlos Maussa (KO 8), Victoriano Sosa (KO 4), Lovemore Ndou (W 12), Randall Bailey (KO 6), DeMarcus Corley (KO 5), Paulie Malignaggi (W 12), and Quintana.

DEFENSE

MARGARITO

Stellar chin has allowed him to get into some bad defensive habits, such as not moving his head at all ... Generally holds his hands up high, at least ... Comes from the "take a punch to land a punch" school, though it hasn't worked out very well his last few fights.

COTTO

Seems like he should be a good defensive fighter – technically sound, good footwork, good balance – but somehow he can't quite put it all together and tends to take a lot of punches ... Reflexes have slowed a bit compared to his physical prime ... Frequently finds himself hurt by a single punch.

MARGARITO

A pressure fighter, but one whose volume tends to vary based on the style of his opponent ... If he's ever flat-out outboxed someone, we don't remember it ... A very good finisher who understands the value in mixing shots to the body and head when he has his man hurt.

COTTO

A classic boxer-puncher, though he has trouble integrating the two aspects of that description ... One of the most-diligent and destructive body punchers in the game ... A true warrior who has been known to stand still and slug it out in situations where he might do better to box and move.

Anotnio Margarito celebrated after his 2008 meeting with Miguel Cotto, who was stopped in 11 rounds.

MARGARITO

If his gloves were loaded all along, was he ever really a world-class fighter? Can he still rock Cotto's questionable chin like he did in '08? Did the beating from Pacquiao transform him from mildly faded to fully shot? How far can his desire to prove himself all over again carry him?

COTTO

Is he psychologically recovered from the beating Margarito gave him last time? Will he slug more, instead of boxing like he did in July '08, because of his personal venom for Margarito? Can he hurt Margarito now that Mosley and Pacquiao have softened him up? Will the largely Puerto Rican MSG crowd help him?

Miguel Cotto is coming off an impressive 12th-round knockout of tough Ricardo Mayorga in March.

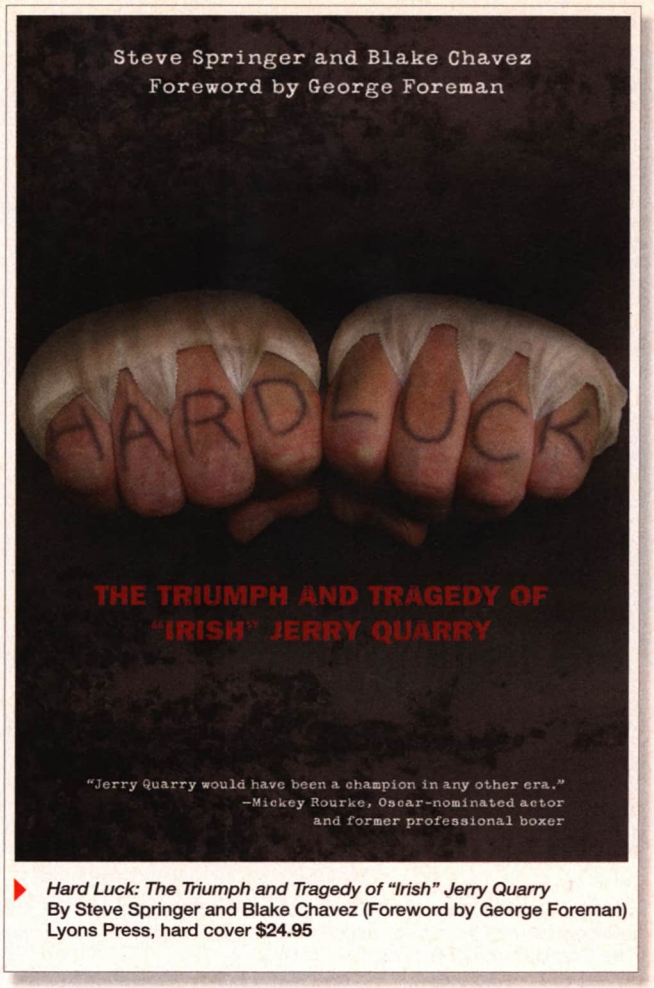
THE OUTCOME

Ever the cool customer, Cotto contains his emotional urges to batter Margarito and sticks to skillful boxing, building an early lead once again. Regardless of what is or isn't in his gloves, Margarito doesn't have the energy he did in '08 and can't quite put together the late rally he needs. Cotto survives some scary moments to gain a semi-satisfying tactical revenge win via clear-cut decision, looking like the less faded of the two aging fighters.

HARD LUCK: THE TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY OF "IRISH" JERRY QUARRY

A COMPELLING NEW BOOK GIVES US FRESH INSIGHT INTO THE LIFE OF THE LATE HEAVYWEIGHT CONTENDER

WORDS: **STEVE SPRINGER AND BLAKE CHAVEZ** / IMAGES: **CENTRAL PRESS / GETTY IMAGES**



Hard Luck: The Triumph and Tragedy of "Irish" Jerry Quarry
By Steve Springer and Blake Chavez (Foreword by George Foreman)
Lyons Press, hard cover **$24.95**

Boxing International Magazine came nosing around after Quarry knocked out five straight opponents to win the 1965 National Golden Gloves heavyweight championship in Kansas City, hoping to get a glimpse of the Golden Child. Quarry started to get a lot of ink.

There was no way amateurs would get in the ring with him anymore after the damage he did in Kansas City. The time was ripe for Quarry to turn pro.

He did not know what lay ahead, and his goals were modest. "If I don't win the heavyweight championship of the world," he said, "I hope to at least make enough money to put myself through college."

Prominent promoters were champing at the bit to snare the sizzling hot property that was Jerry Quarry. He graduated from training in manager Johnny Flores's backyard garage gym to working out in the most-notorious knuckle factory on the West Coast, the Main Street Gym in Los Angeles.

Flores would serve as co-manager with Jerry's father, Jack. Tasting leather from grown men ten years his senior who outweighed him by thirty to forty pounds was far from glamorous, but Jerry persevered.

His mother, Arwanda, would pack basket lunches and haul the entire clan over to the gym for leisurely picnics while Quarry trained. The gym's colorful owner, Howie Steindler, often got angry at the mess they left.

Steindler posted a note on the front door: THIS IS A BOXING GYM. IF YOU WANT TO HAVE A PICNIC—GO TO GRIFFITH PARK!

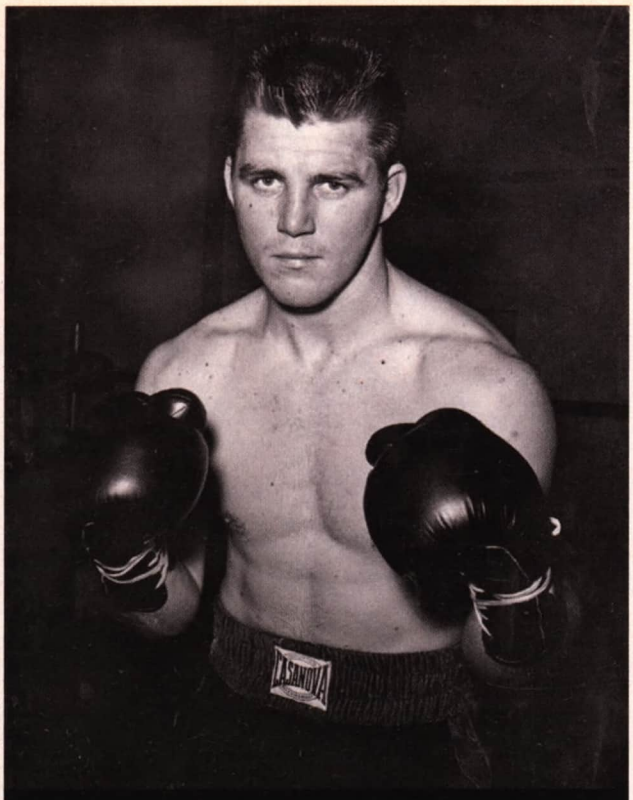
As Quarry honed his skills, opportunities to launch his professional career came knocking. Promoters from across the country wanted to control the Golden Gloves sensation.

The most aggressive suitor was Aileen Eaton, promoter at The

"Hard Luck: The Triumph and Tragedy of 'Irish' Jerry Quarry," by Steve Springer and Blake Chavez, is the story of the fighter whose memorable battles against the giants of the golden age of heavyweights were no more brutal than his battle to come of age under an abusive father whose cloudy outlook on life was formed in the Oklahoma Dust Bowl and expressed in those two words -- Hard Luck -- that he had tattooed on his knuckles.

What follows is not a straight excerpt from the book but rather segments that will take the reader from Quarry's victory in the Golden Gloves tournament to the wild environment of Los Angeles' Olympic Auditorium, where he first grew to prominence, to his brutal 1969 match against Joe Frazier and finally to his death in 1999 at age 53 of pugilistic dementia.

– STEVE SPRINGER



Jerry Quarry in 1967, when he was 20.
Photo by George Rodriguez from the Bill O'Neill collection

Olympic Auditorium, located in downtown Los Angeles at the intersection of 18th Street and Grand Avenue. She was known as The Grand Dame of Boxing.

Behind her back, she was known as The Dragon Lady because of her toughness.

When Quarry fought at the Olympic Auditorium, it was a war zone. The people who followed live boxing were some of the thirstiest human beings on earth. The beer flowed like the Ganges.

An interesting dynamic took place at The Olympic when Quarry fought. The Mexican patrons came to watch their lighter weight class countrymen fight. They had little interest in the heavyweight game, and they were certainly not enamored with a big good-looking white guy who kept winning all his fights. So there was friction to begin with whenever Quarry fought. He had his fervent fans to be sure, but the majority of patrons were not of the Anglo persuasion.

All that tinderbox needed was some gasoline. Enter the Quarry clan. The Quarry gals were high profile. Jerry's sisters – Diana, Brenda, Janet, and Wilma – all knew how to make an entrance. They were dressed to kill, and when they strolled in, the place went bananas. The wolf whistles, catcalls and cursing roared across the arena with testosterone-drenched venom.

Wilma estimated that the Quarrys were involved in at least thirty brawls at The Olympic. Some were mini-riots, while others were just run-of-the-mill fistfights. The instigating fans would come up to the section where the Quarrys were seated and, while Jerry was fighting, tell the Quarrys that he (fill in the derisive terms of your choice).

"There was fighting everywhere we went, but to be fair to us, they were in our face," Wilma said. "Strangers would [come up to us] while Jerry's up in the ring fighting his heart out and they would insult him. Our adrenaline is running so you just fight back and then some man's going to come and defend us 'cause we're fighting men and women, and then it starts up and everyone jumps in."
"These Quarry gals, their temperatures are really high," explained Wilma's husband, Robert Pearson. "And they were in there slugging it out . . . they were fighting."

Wilma acknowledges that the audience at The Olympic loved to see women walk down the aisles during the one-minute rest periods between rounds. "My sister Diane was very flamboyant and dressed pretty wild. Well, one night she was wearing one of those shimmy dresses and the crowd went wild. She started blowing them kisses and a riot broke out. They were going to ban her, but then they found out Jerry was her brother, so they let it slide."

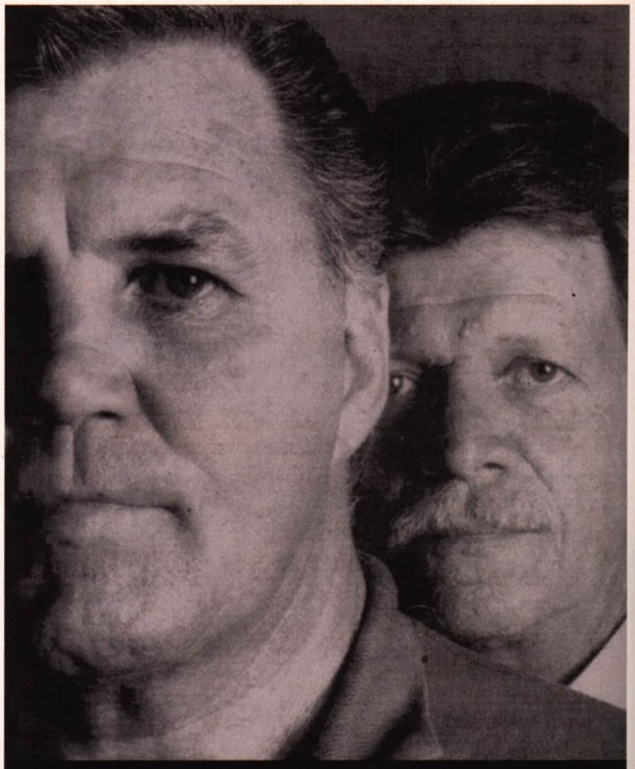
Jack Quarry was always in the background, running the show, but occasionally, he surfaced when he felt the need to defend his son publicly, as was the case before Jerry's 1969 fight against Joe Frazier.

Jack was incensed by comments from The Old Mongoose, Archie Moore, that denigrated Jerry's ability. Jack tore into Moore in Boxing Illustrated saying. "Who is Archie Moore to criticize the caliber of present-day fighters when he built his own reputation by knocking over a bunch of bums?"

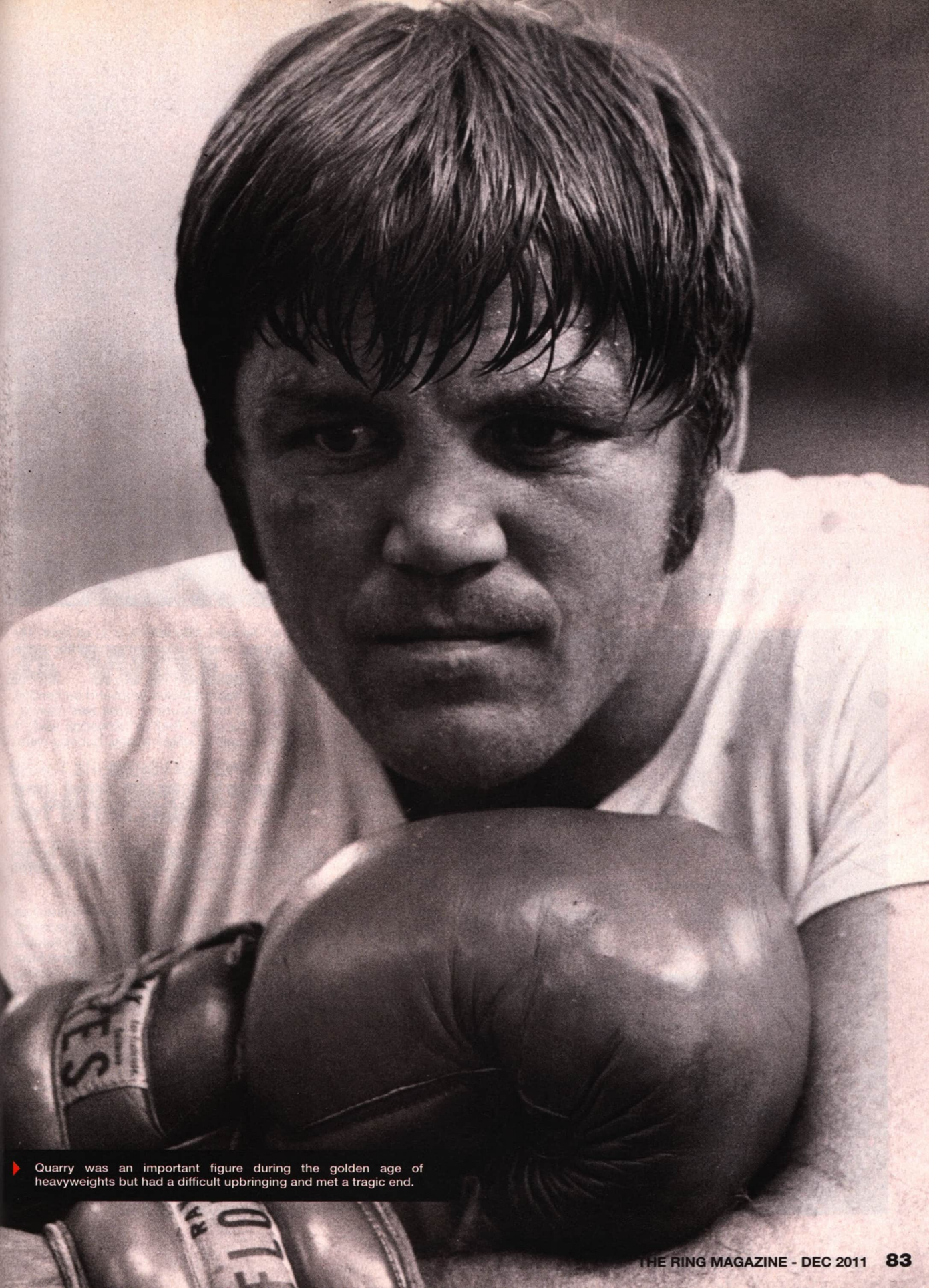
Archie had been quoted as saying he could name five guys off the top of his head who could whip Quarry. Jack challenged Archie to name the five because, "I know some promoters who would only be too happy to stage the bouts. Sonny Liston is not at all interested in fighting Jerry, unless he gets all the money. Sonny Liston hasn't shown me a thing in recent fights. I honestly don't think he could even beat me, if I was in shape."

Jack was 47 at the time.

"Jerry Quarry has nothing in the world to apologize about," his



Brothers Jerry and Jimmy, about a year before Jerry's death on Jan. 3, 1999.
Photo by Paul Orduna from the Bill O'Neill collection



Quarry was an important figure during the golden age of heavyweights but had a difficult upbringing and met a tragic end.

father said "He's a good, honest, clean-living young man, loyal to his family and friends – and to his country, I might add – and in the ring, he fights hard and clean. At 23, he's still young for a heavyweight, and he's still improving. Contrary to what Archie Moore may say, the heavyweights today are just as good as the ones who used to beat up on him."

June 23, 1969 saw Madison Square Garden packed with 15,507 maniacal fight fans who paid a total of $502,518 to witness the early summer fireworks that Jerry Quarry had promised.

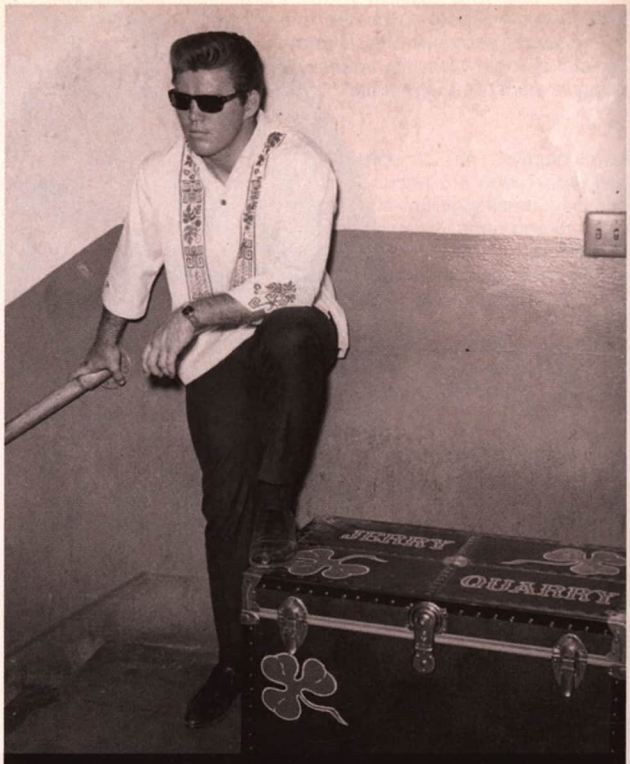
Quarry entered the ring wearing a pink mandarin robe and blue golf hat.

The man many consider the definitive authority in boxing, Bert Sugar, calls the first round the greatest he's ever seen. Quarry won that epic round on all three scorecards. Should anyone ever question the legitimacy of Jerry Quarry as to his rightful place in the pantheon of boxing's Golden Age of Heavyweights, slip them the footage of the first Quarry-Frazier fight.

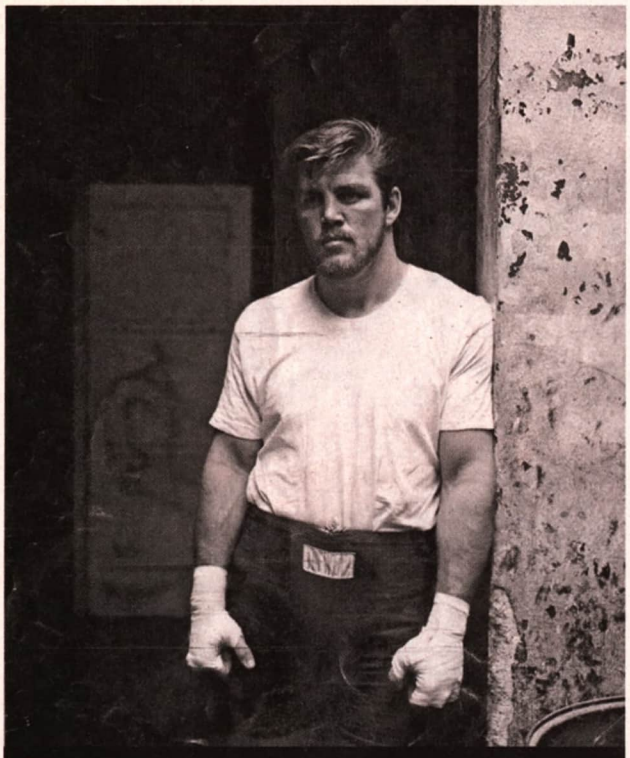
Quarry was outgunned, but he wasn't going anywhere. He had business at The Garden that night and he was tending to it. Frazier was smokin', pure and simple. The match was a thing of beauty. It still resonates today with those fortunate enough to have witnessed it.

In his corner awaiting the bell to start round six, Frazier was in awe of Quarry's durability and steely will. He told his manager, Yank Durham, "'Damn, Yank, that man sure do have an iron chin."

Frazier did enough in round seven to have the ring doctor come take another long look at Quarry. Frazier had split Jerry's cheek open and blood was everywhere. It was a nasty gash. The doctor stopped the fight. Quarry was devastated, not because the stoppage was premature, but because he truly felt he had Joe's number and would be champion that night.



Quarry displays his Elivs look atop the stairs at the Main Street Gym in Los Angeles in 1967.
Photo by Paul Orduna from the Bill O'Neill collection



A replica of this photo of Quarry, taken at the Main Street Gym in L.A. in 1968 by Hollywood photographer George Rodriguez, appeared on the cover of West magazino and is embedded in Jerry's gravestopne in Shafter, Calif.
Photo from the Bill O'Neill collection

"My right hand is all right," he said. "My left hand is all right. My back is all right. The only thing was, I had too much fighter in the ring with me."

Arwanda Quarry marched into Frazier's locker room and demanded to see the champ. Joe greeted her, unsure of what was coming. "I just wanted to shake your hand Mr. Frazier," Arwanda said. "I didn't think you were man enough to whip my boy, but you were. Congratulations."

When Quarry walked the streets after that night, he was boxing royalty. Sure there would be the random assortment of haters, but Jerry Quarry was now a larger than life celebrity.

Quarry may have risen to heights unimaginable in his youth, but, tragically, he flamed out far too early from the effects of pugilistic dementia. He died in 1999 at the age of 53.

Jack Quarry had returned to Bakersfield and looked stricken when they lowered Jerry into the ground. Mickey Rourke recalled, "I remember seeing The Old Man on the walker, and I remember looking . . . and I was thinking about Jerry, and I was looking at Mike [Quarry] over in the corner, I think we were drinking some whiskey, and I looked down at the old man and I remember reading what it said across his knuckles. It read "Hard Luck." And I said, 'You bet your ass it is!'" ■

The one word that best describes Beitbut Shumenov is "fierce," as he demonstrates here against Gabriel Campillo.

A WALKING MIRACLE

BEIBUT SHUMENOV HAS EVOLVED FROM A FRAIL CHILD INTO A **FEARSOME WARRIOR – AND HE'S ONLY GETTING STARTED**

WORDS: **JOSEPH SANTOLIQUITO** / IMAGES: **NAOKI FAKUDA / CHRIS COZZONE / FIGHTWIRE IMAGES**

Somewhere, curled deep inside Beibut Shumenov, is the baby boy. He's laying there, listless and shriveled, his skin blue against a white blanket. His hands twitch. His tiny chest pounds rapidly as he gasps for air. He has no energy to cry. He's unaware of the tangled web of tubes and cords plugged into his body, unaware that he is dying. Somewhere inside him, that child is still there.

Today, Beibut Shumenov considers himself a walking miracle -- and he should. Once frail and clinging to life, the 28-year-old WBA light heavyweight world champion from Shymkent, Kazakhstan now has everything. Everything, perhaps, except the undivided attention of the boxing world.

But that could change soon.

Shumenov himself is something of an oddity. On the one hand, he's a muscular 6-foot-2 fighter with boundless energy. On the other, there are things about him that make you wonder why he has chosen this nasty vocation to begin with: He possesses a law degree, can speak Russian, English, Turkish, Kazakh and Uzbek, and comes from a wealthy, emotionally stable family. Now he is looking to grow his name and brand far beyond his popularity in Kazakhstan.

"MY FATHER CAME BACK AND **FOUND ME BLUE**, AND RUSHED ME TO THE HOSPITAL."

But there is something else different about him, something that separates him from the gnarled, cliched backstories of most world-class fighters. There is something else that lingers. For Beibut (pronounced BAY-boot), it goes back to before Kazakhstan became the last of the Soviet republics to declare its sovereignty in December 1991. It goes back to a bottle of milk, two women arguing, and the baby they were supposed to be watching.

"My aunts were supposed to be watching me and they fed me poison milk," says Shumenov in broken English. "I was staying with my [paternal] grandmother while my father was working for the government as an accountant in Shymkent. My father came back and found me blue, and rushed me to the hospital."

Beibut's father, Amirkhan, and mother, Saule, were told that the poison had seeped into their son's blood stream. Doctors gave him a few days to live. They tried desperately to purge the toxins, but his tiny veins wouldn't allow for a needle. Instead, they injected an IV into his temple. Then they waited … and waited. In the meantime, Shumenov's mother and father clung to each other, anxious, praying that their baby boy would somehow survive.

But even if Beibut did survive, his parents were warned, the experience would weaken his immune system; make him susceptible to kidney failure, or leave him gravely ill from a common cold. He would grow up an indolent child, with a low tolerance for anything physical.

Beibut Shumenov tries to hurt his opponents with every punch he throws, as Gabriel Campillo would attest.

"I can't even imagine what my parents were going through then," Beibut says. "The doctors gave me a couple of days to live; I wasn't going to make it. My parents told me they were crying all of the time. They felt like they lost me already. They were hoping for a miracle, and that miracle happened to me. But I can't forget what it was like growing up. I did survive, but I was sick for part of my childhood. My lungs were always giving out. Sometimes I had no energy to do anything."

Young Beibut stood on the fringes. Other children played soccer and basketball. Beibut tried, but never had the stamina to play for very long.

"I always wanted to become a strong man. What brought me to that was watching Bruce Lee movies," Shumenov recalls. "That brought interest to the martial arts. In the Soviet Union then, everyone that lived in that time, they know how hard it was. If you were a growing boy, even little boys, you'd have to be like a man. When I was in second and third grade, if a fifth or sixth grader took money from us, you couldn't say anything about it. You would be looked at as weak. That was our culture."

Shumenov received no breaks at home, either; his younger brother, Chingis, picked on him mercilessly. "I got it everywhere, even home. I was weak physically, but I think what helped get through it was that I had a strong will," he said. "Running, playing basketball, soccer, I wasn't able to do those things very well, but I never gave up trying."

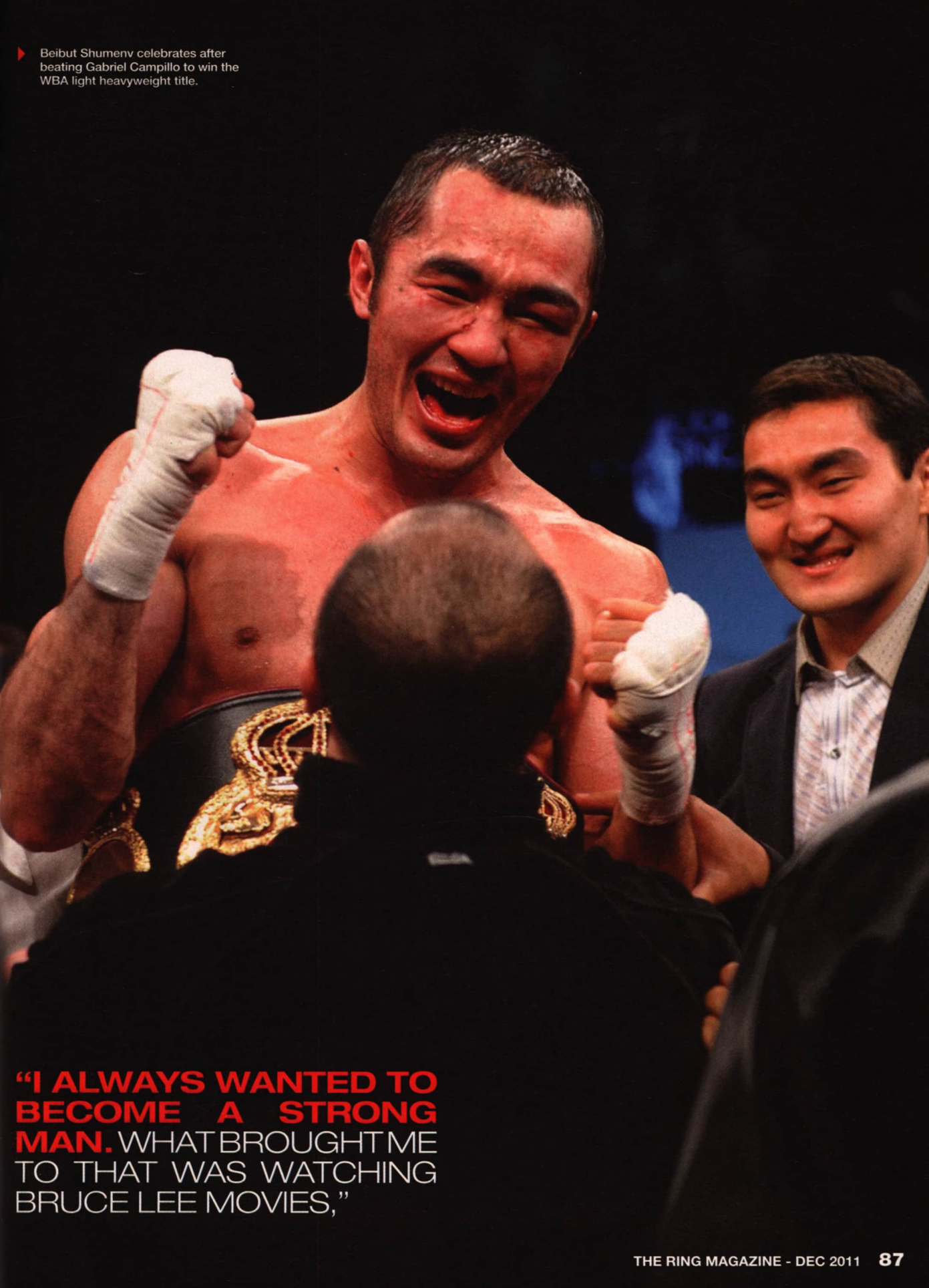
As he struggled with his own situation, the world around Shumenov was quickly evolving. The Shumenovs, like so many families, had become accustomed to a certain way of life. They were raised under the iron scrutiny of Soviet communism, where you risked imprisonment if you tried to start a business. His parents – father an accountant and mother a school teacher – worked long hours; like other citizens, they were dependent on the government for employment, health benefits and education. But the old Soviet Union was crumbling. On Dec.16, 1991, Kazakhstan, the largest of the former Soviet republics, declared its freedom. The Shumenovs were free, but freedom is all they received.

"We didn't have enough money to buy bread," Shumenov remembers. "My father is a lovely man, he's one of 10 children. He loves his brothers and sisters, but on the days our parents sent us to their homes to borrow money, they closed the doors on us. My parents, even today, they support all of our relatives. Before the independence, everyone was the same. After, my family had to adjust. We had some good days and bad days. My father was very trusting. My parents would have arguments. My mother would tell him, 'Don't do this.' My father is stubborn, he'd do it anyway. We went through a few failed businesses in the beginning. But everyone went through those hard days. We had limited food. You went from a standard salary to trying to make it on your own."

It was amid these difficulties that Shumenov's life took a fateful turn. As a kid inspired by Bruce Lee movies, Shumenov had trained in martial arts to increase his strength and build his body. He had no aspirations beyond that. Then, as a teenager, he discovered Mike Tyson. He saw the viciousness in Tyson's left hook and how he knocked opponents out cold. To a teenager who grew up a wan child, that kind of power was intoxicating. Suddenly, boxing had him in its grip.

At the same time, his family found itself in a perfect storm of another sort. Amirkhan and Saule began applying their ceaseless work ethic into marketing bazaars and quickly made a fortune. Shumenov embarked on an amateur boxing career in 1996 under the tutelage of Kazakhstan's nationally renowned coach, Nurgali Safiulin, training at Central Stadium Boxing Gym in Shymkent, which turned out 11 of the 12 Kazakhstan national champions in '96.

"I liked it, but I didn't take it seriously, because everything seemed



Beibut Shumenv celebrates after beating Gabriel Campillo to win the WBA light heavyweight title.

"I ALWAYS WANTED TO BECOME A STRONG MAN. WHAT BROUGHT ME TO THAT WAS WATCHING BRUCE LEE MOVIES,"

One could see in Beitbut Shumenov's face his passion for fighting, as shown here against Danny Santiago in July.

easy to me," Beibut admits. "My aim was winning a gold medal at the 2004 Olympics in Athens. But I'll be honest, I didn't think I had to prepare myself to that kind of level. I went there with the idea of winning a gold medal. My trainer was confident, I was confident. I had a meeting with the Kazakhstan president. He was relying on me to win the gold medal. There was that kind of pressure."

But expectations would not be enough. Competing as a light heavyweight, Shumenov defeated Poland's Aleksy Kuziemski in the first round but broke his hand during the fight. He lost to Turkey's Ihsan Yildirim Tarhan in the second round, essentially fighting with one fist.

That was it.

As often happens after an Olympic loss, the defeat became much more than that. Shumenov's dreams were shattered. He wanted to quit.

"You never know, if I didn't break my hand, who knows what would have happened," says Shumenov, who earned his law degree the year before Athens. "But I did. And it did get me down. After the Olympics, I decided to quit. I was working out and blew up to 230 pounds. I was still kick boxing, lifting weights and wrestling. I lost some personal discipline. I look back on those times and wonder what I was thinking. I was training hard, and living a night life. I always prided myself on working hard, and those days, I didn't have motivation or dedication. I let people down. I felt I let my parents down, my country down. I felt terrible. I lost interest in everything."

Following a few years of wandering, Safiulin called his prized former pupil and told him to never fight amateurs again. Safiulin, too, had quit the sport because of Shumenov. "Out of respect for him, I decided to turn pro," Shumenov said. "I couldn't go back after Safiulin left. I blamed myself. Then I looked at all those pros. I wasn't confident that I would be able to succeed. I thought they were super humans. I watched Tyson, Erik Morales, Roy Jones, Oscar De La Hoya, Bernard Hopkins. They're not regular humans. They're super humans. I thought I'd get knocked out in the first round. I thought my amateur background would help me, but the pro level is a completely different sport. Pro boxing is brutal."

Not too brutal for Shumenov to succeed. After only 13 fights, he has a major title. He carries a 12-1 (8 knockouts) record, having smashed veterans Donnell Wiggins, Lavell Finger and Byron Mitchell on his

TOP: Danny Santiago got in his licks but ended up on the wrong end of a ninth-round knockout in July.
BOTTOM: Beibut Shumenov can do damage in close quarters, as Gabriel Campillo learns here.

way up and scoring decision victories over Epifanio Mendoza and Montell Griffin. He avenged his lone loss, beating Gabriel Campillo for the WBA belt in January 2010, and is now aiming for the best at 175. That might include the winner of the Oct. 15 Hopkins-Chad Dawson fight, if the winner is willing.

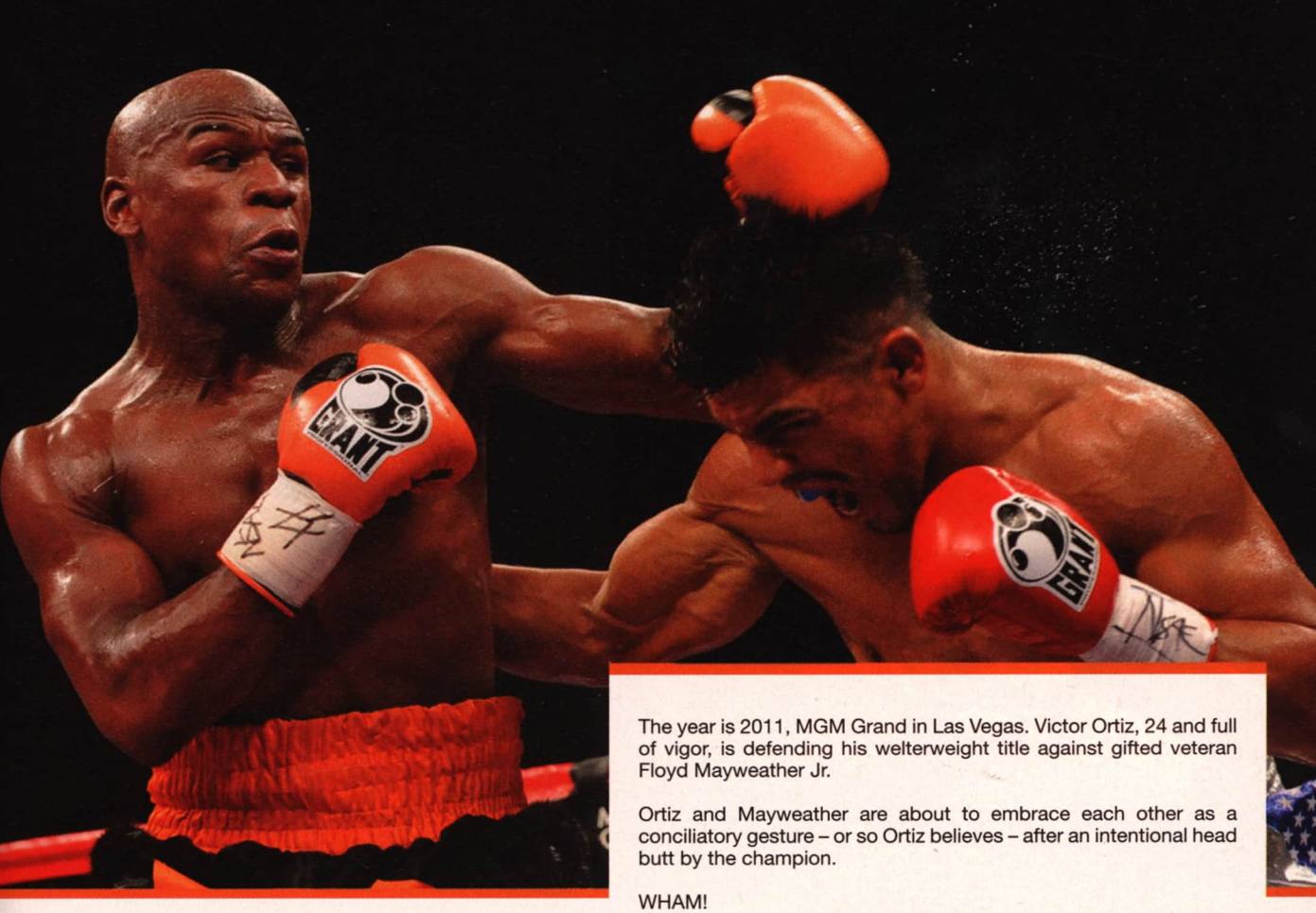
"One thing I will tell you about Beibut, he's dedicated to improving all of the time," says Hall of Famer Don Chagrin, Shumenov's adviser. "He's only had 13 fights, and he makes some mistakes, but he's right there to correct them. Given proper matches, there's no telling how good Beibut can be. Beibut can catch on [in the U.S.] ... you know how this business is; one signature fight can put him over the top.

"I like him going forward. It's how we see things and future opponents. Beibut is a volume puncher and he has strength, and a good size. Opponents underestimate him, because they see the few fights he's had. But what they don't realize is that he's trained all of his life. He has an extensive amateur career, and as a kick boxer. If he can get guys that will fight him, Beibut will do very, very well."

His parents have never been keen on his career choice. They want him home practicing law, or running one of their many bazaars. But Beibut forges ahead, buoyed by daydreams about world championships and attaining boxing immortality, like the legends he watched in his youth.

"My parents are very proud of me, even though they are against me boxing," Shumenov said. "Chingis gets on the phone right away to tell them how I did after each fight. I realize I have to do more to do to become a world champion, and I'm stubborn enough to keep working for it."

It's a stubbornness that is part of him, that shapes him from the inside. "You can say it goes back to when I was a baby fighting for my life," he said. Indeed, that earlier version of him still lives, and together they fight for the future with the intensity of survival itself. Though he is now anything but frail, in many ways he is still "Baby Blue Beibut." ■



AN UGLY NIGHT IN VEGAS

FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.'S DOMINATING PERFORMANCE AGAINST VICTOR ORTIZ IS OBSCURED BY A SERIES OF BIZARRE EVENTS.

WORDS: **MICHAEL ROSENTHAL** / IMAGES: **NAOKI FAKUDA / CHRIS COZZONE / FIGHTWIRE IMAGES**

The year is 1927, Yankee Stadium. Jack Dempsey, nearing the end of his fabulous career, is fighting 25-year-old Jack Sharkey for the right to meet heavyweight champion Gene Tunney.

Sharkey has outboxed the aging icon for six-plus rounds when, early in the seventh, Dempsey lands a low blow. Sharkey winces and then turns to referee Jack O'Sullivan as if to say, "he can't do that."

WHAM!

As Sharkey is appealing his case, Dempsey, an enormous puncher, lands a left to the jaw that puts his young foe down and out. Sharkey never saw what hit him.

The year is 2011, MGM Grand in Las Vegas. Victor Ortiz, 24 and full of vigor, is defending his welterweight title against gifted veteran Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Ortiz and Mayweather are about to embrace each other as a conciliatory gesture – or so Ortiz believes – after an intentional head butt by the champion.

WHAM!

With the young fighter's guard down, Mayweather lands a left hook – which turns Ortiz's face to referee Joe Cortez – and then a devastating straight right that puts his foe down and out. Ortiz never saw what hit him.

The moral of this story then, now and forever? PROTECT YOURSELF AT ALL TIMES.

There is a significant difference in the stories of Sharkey and Ortiz, though: Sharkey was winning. Ortiz was being picked apart and frustrated by a far more gifted fighter who very likely would've won a one-sided decision or scored a knockout anyway.

That reality is what steered the fight to its ultimate outcome.

The final sequence began only moments before the knockout. Ortiz, clearly desperate, trapped Mayweather in a corner and unloaded a barrage of ill-intended punches that lifted the crowd to his feet. For a moment, it seemed as if he might yet have a chance.

Then, out of nowhere, he stunned everybody by leaping head first into Mayweather's face, splitting his lower lip.
The young man knew immediately that he had blown it. After Cortez waved his arms to stop the action, Oritz embraced Mayweather and then kissed him on the cheek … in the middle of a war-like prize fight … in front of millions of television viewers … kissed him.

It got weirder. Cortez deducted a point from Ortiz, which was justified because of the flagrant nature of the foul. The ref then apparently told Ortiz and Mayweather to resume boxing, although Ortiz later claimed he never heard the order.

That might be because he was still reeling from his own stupidity, the main reason a final embrace turned into a final punch and ended one of the strangest fights in recent years with one second remaining in the fourth round.

Then things got even wilder. The bizarre series of events led to a dramatic confrontation between Mayweather and HBO analyst Larry Merchant in the ring immediately after the fight, followed by universal criticism of both fighters -- Ortiz for the head-butt and loss of focus, and Mayweather for what many saw as a cheap shot.

Some said Ortiz (29-3-2, 22 knockouts) got what he deserved even if Mayweather took advantage of his wandering mind. Ortiz, after all, was the one who turned it into a street fight.

And the perception that Ortiz isn't mentally tough – originally the product of his brutal give-and-take brawl against Marcos Maidana in 2009, in which he quit in the sixth round and then questioned his own commitment to boxing – rushed back the moment he butted Mayweather.

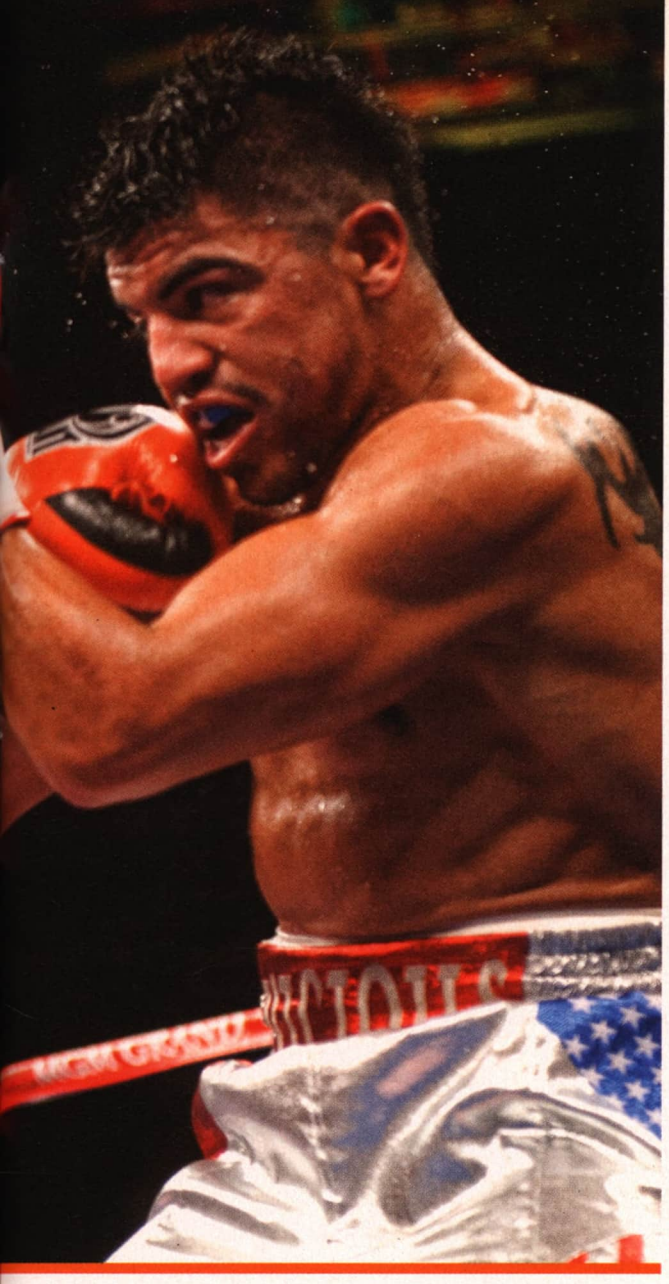
A prizefighter with poise doesn't lose his head like that, even under duress. Mike Tyson was a weak-minded fighter, which is why he resorted to biting Evander Holyfield's ear when he became frustrated in their second fight.
That's not the kind of company Ortiz wants to keep.

Professional boxers also are supposed to know by instinct that you never, ever lose focus when you're between those ropes with someone who is intent upon hurting you. The fact that Ortiz momentarily forgot where he was further reinforced the notion that he wasn't prepared for a fight of this magnitude.

And, finally, his comments at the post-fight news conference left many shaking their heads.

"I was looking at Joe and he said 'break' or something and I'm like, huh. Whatever. Bottom line is I had fun. It was fun." Fun? Embarrassing yourself by acting like a thug? Over-apologizing? Failing to adhere to a basic boxing tenet? Getting your ass knocked out while you're not paying attention? Fun?

Ortiz made $2 million for his effort, the biggest paycheck of his career. He paid a steep price for his foibles, though. Gone is his first world title. Gone is the considerable momentum he established after a courageous effort against Andre Berto, from whom he took the belt in April. And gone is the notion on the part of some that he could actually compete with a fighter as talented as Mayweather.



All is not lost, though. Ortiz mentioned one thing that will work in his favor going forward: his youth. He's a good fighter with fire burning inside, which undoubtedly contributed to the now-infamous head butt.

And he has the advantage of a strong promotional company behind him, Golden Boy, which will use its influence to place him in more big-money fights in the near future.

Thus, he should receive the opportunity to rebuild, as he was able to do in the fights that followed Maidana. Whether he can succeed again remains to be seen.

Meanwhile, Mayweather appeared to be at his sublime best for almost four full rounds after a 16-month hiatus from boxing.

The former pound-for-pound king toyed with Ortiz, landing one beautiful straight right after another to the head of a fighter with glaring defensive deficiencies. And Ortiz failed to find a chink in Mayweather's own defensive armor, which is among the most-impenetrable ever seen.

A one-sided victory appeared to be unfolding ... and then the craziness.

Mayweather walked away with a knockout, took Ortiz's WBC welterweight belt, remained unbeaten and reclaimed his place as one of the two best active fighters, not to mention a payday that will approach $40 million when all the profits are counted.

Did he really do himself any favors ending the fight the way he did, though?

Mayweather (42-0, 26 knockouts) probably could've broken Ortiz down and delivered the same result legitimately, which would've been his most sensational triumph since stopping Ricky Hatton in 2007 and a wonderful springboard to a possible showdown with Manny Pacquiao.

That's what we should be talking about, a virtuoso performance against a young, hungry opponent. Instead, we're focused on Ortiz's frailties and whether Mayweather was justified in punching a man he knew wasn't ready to resume fighting.

Was he justified?

Mayweather has his supporters. They bring up what appear to be irrefutable truths -- that it was Ortiz's responsibility to protect himself and that Mayweather broke no rules, which was confirmed by Cortez.

They also cite the aforementioned fact that Ortiz started the whole thing with the head butt. Mayweather merely finished it.

That doesn't necessarily mean what he did was right, though. More than three-quarters of voters in a RingTV poll immediately after the fight said Mayweather's actions were at least somewhat unethical, and more than half called them "very unethical."

Once again Mayweather ended up on the wrong end of public opinion.

Then there's the encounter with Merchant in the ring immediately after the fight, in which Mayweather went ballistic after he was asked whether the deciding punches were fair.

"You never give me a fair shake," he screamed at his 80-year-old nemesis on national television. "HBO needs to fire you! You don't know s--- about boxing!" Merchant's response will go down in broadcasting history as a classic: "I wish I were 50 years younger and I would kick your ass!"

An octogenarian stood up to the bully. Again, Mayweather didn't look good.

Does he care? Nah.

The bad-boy persona, combined with his undeniable skills, strikes a chord with a lot of people. That's why he probably is the No. 1 pay-per-view attraction (yes, above Manny Pacquiao) on the planet.

Some love him. Some hate him. In the end, though, everyone watches, which has made "Money" a very rich man.
And, in spite of the unsatisfying victory, he's back in the game. That means we must resume the conversation about whether the sport's two biggest stars – Mayweather and Pacquiao – might yet meet in the ring.

Pacquiao is scheduled to face Juan Manuel Marquez on Nov. 12. If he wins, the target date for Mayweather-Pacquiao could be May 5.

If that fight happens, we'll forget all about the surreal events of Sept. 17 just as we have the Dempsey-Sharkey fight. At least until the next time it happens. ■

Floyd Mayweather Jr. consistently found the head of Victor Ortiz until the bizarre ending of their fight on Sept. 17.

COMPILED BY **DON STEWART** / IMAGES: **NAOKI FUKUDA / SCOTTFOSTER / FIGHTWIRE IMAGES / SANKEI / GETTY IMAGES / BORIS STREUBEL**

SAUL ALVAREZ KO 6 ALFONSO GOMEZ

Many ringside observers at Staples Center felt referee Wayne Hedgpeth's technical stoppage at 2:36 of the sixth round was premature. A legion of boxing insiders and hardcore fans watching the fight on the Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Victor Ortiz pay-per-view broadcast cried foul on Twitter and other social media sites.

One can't help but wonder whether Alvarez could have ended his junior middleweight encounter with Gomez earlier and in more-decisive fashion had he fought in character throughout the entertaining bout.

After controlling most of the first round with quick and accurate combinations, Alvarez dropped Gomez with a well-timed counter hook. The knockdown established what most fans knew coming into the fight, that Alvarez is the faster, stronger and harder-punching fighter.

So why did Mexican star spend so much of rounds two, three and four counterpunching from a defensive posture? The answer is simple: The young student of the game was practicing different boxing techniques against his game opponent. However, the gym is where a fighter should practice various maneuvers, not during the actual fight, and certainly not against a tough fighter as experienced as Gomez, who has fought the likes of Miguel Cotto, Jose Luis Castillo and Arturo Gatti.

At times Alvarez was successful with his lean-and-counter tactics. At other times, particularly when he tried to employ a Mayweather-style shoulder roll, he allowed the ever-advancing Gomez to score with right hands. Alvarez had mixed success when he willingly backed to the ropes and waited for Gomez to get off. In the fourth round, Alvarez, who wisely kept his body at an angle, blocked Gomez's one-two combinations and returned fire with knee-buckling uppercuts.

However, Gomez applied harder pressure in round five and caught Alvarez as the popular redhead tried to work off the ropes. "I wasn't unfocused (during the early rounds), I was confident because of the fans," said Alvarez, who made his second defense of the WBC belt. "I did my job in the beginning. I hit him hard in the first round but I knew it was only a matter of time before I ended the fight."

That time came near the end of the sixth round after Alvarez regained control of the bout with stick-and-move tactics. Alvarez pounced on Gomez after a perfect uppercut rocked the Los Angeles resident back on his heels. A series of right crosses backed Gomez to the ropes where Alvarez teed off with uppercuts and hooks until Hedgpeth halted the bout at 2:36 of the round.

Gomez, who was able to block some of Alvarez's punches, was never off his feet. The veteran was complimentary of Alvarez after the fight but he wasn't happy about the stoppage.

"He's a great puncher but I felt like the referee was looking for a reason to stop the fight," Gomez said. "I wanted to go the distance. I wanted to continue."

Douglass Fischer

MATCH STATS

DIVISION: Junior middleweight
LOCATION: Los Angeles
DATE: Sept. 19, 2011
TELEVISION: Pay-per-view
PROMOTER: Golden Boy Promotions
REFEREE: Wayne Hedgpeth (USA)

SAUL ALVAREZ
AGE: 21
WEIGHT: 153¾
RESIDENCE: Juanacatlan, Mexico
BIRTHPLACE: Tlajomulco, Mexico
RECORD: 38-0-1 (28)
RING RANKING: 3

ALFONSO GOMEZ
AGE: 30
WEIGHT: 152¾
RESIDENCE: Guadalajara, Mexico
BIRTHPLACE: Guadalajara, Mexico
RECORD: 23-5-2 (12)

ERIK MORALES KO 10 PABLO CESAR CANO

Erik Morales defeated Pablo Cesar Cano to become the first Mexican to win titles in four weight divisions.

While the WBC seemed determined to do everything but hand Morales a belt in his fourth division, late-sub Cano made sure "El Terrible" had to work for it.

In what proved to be an entertaining, bloody fight, unbeaten-but-untested Cano gave Morales plenty of problems on the Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Victor Ortiz undercard at MGM Grand before Cano's corner stopped it after the 10th round. Cano rocked Morales on several occasions, including the seventh, when he opened up a cut over the future Hall of Famer's left eye.

But Morales' poise and experience proved to be the difference as he became the first Mexican fighter to win belts in four classes. He picked up the vacant WBC junior welterweight trinket, which was stripped for dubious reasons from Timothy Bradley. Though Morales was coming off an April loss to Marcos Maidana, the WBC saw fit to match him with Jorge Barrios for the vacant strap. Barrios, who has never fought at 140 pounds, pulled out. He was replaced by the more deserving Lucas Matthysse, who eventually pulled out due to illness, opening the door for the 21-year-old Cano.

After a feeling-out opening round, the pace picked up in the second, when Cano caught Morales' attention with a few hard combinations. Morales came back with more pressure to take the third as the momentum began to swing back and forth.

Both fighters landed cleanly in the fourth, with Morales' shots seeming to pack more sting. Cano, who began bleeding from above the left eye in the fourth, shook Morales with a hard right hand upstairs in the fifth. Morales came right back with combinations as the two brawled until the bell. A busier Morales rallied to take the sixth as Cano's left eye began to close, but Cano came back in the seventh with a flush right hand that opened a nasty cut above Morales' left eye that clearly bothered the veteran.

Morales was back on the attack in the eighth, however, as his punches began to do major damage to Cano's face. By the ninth, both of Cano's eyes were badly swollen and he was bleeding from the nose as well as from the left eye. Cano began moving backwards in an attempt to counter, but Morales continued to tag him easily with right hands.

After a series of rights landed for Morales in the 10th, referee Kenny Bayless called time to allow the ringside doctor to examine Cano's battered face. The fight continued, and Morales landed well until the final bell. Between rounds, ringside doctors advised Cano's trainers against sending their fighter out for the 11th, and the corner obliged.

At the time of the stoppage, Morales led on the cards of judges Tim Miller and Ricardo Ocasio, while Dave Moretti had it even at 95-95. The Ring had Morales ahead 96-94. According to CompuBox, Morales slightly outlanded Cano 214-207, though Cano landed a few more power shots at 119-114.

"He's a young fighter and he throws a lot of punches," Morales said afterward. "It took me some time to get my rhythm, but when I did, I was clearly the better fighter. I'm really happy about the fourth world title, but it was a little more difficult than I thought that it would be."

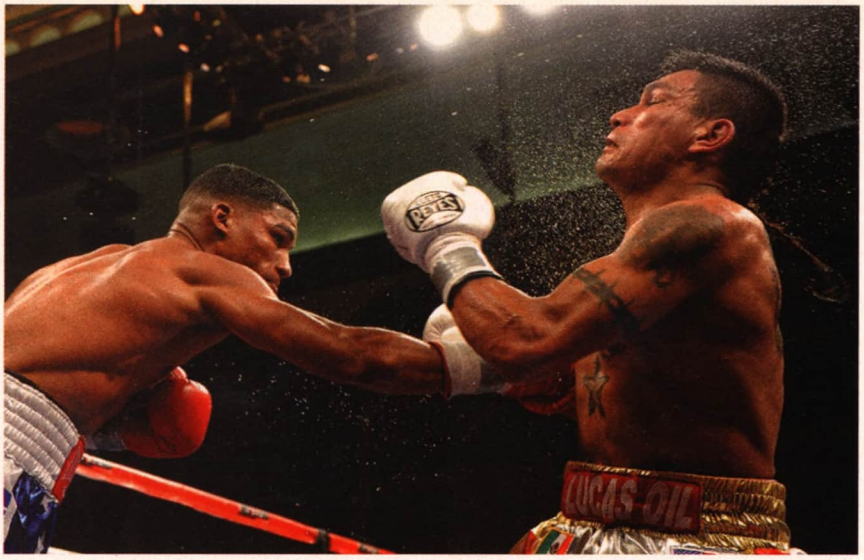
MATCH STATS

DIVISION: Junior welterweight
LOCATION: Las Vegas
DATE: Sept. 19, 2011
TELEVISION: Pay-per-view
PROMOTER: Golden Boy Promotions
REFEREE: Kenny Bayless (USA)

ERIK MORALES
AGE: 35
WEIGHT: 140
RESIDENCE: San Ysidro, CA
BIRTHPLACE: Tijuana, Mexico
RECORD: 52-7 (36)
RING RANKING: 7

PABLO CESAR CANO
AGE: 30
WEIGHT: 140
RESIDENCE: Atizapan de Zaragoza, Mexico
BIRTHPLACE: Guadalajara, Mexico
Record: 22-1-1 (17)

YURIORKIS GAMBOA TECH. DEC. 8 DANIEL PONCE DE LEON



Gamboa took one step closer to a marquee fight – though not with the kind of scintillating performance we're used to seeing from the Cuban sensation – as he defeated Ponce de Leon in anticlimactic fashion before 2,085 at Boardwalk Hall's Adrian Phillips Ballroom.

The bout, televised as part of HBO's World Championship Boxing series, was far more competitive than expected, though not very close in the end. The difference proved to be Gamboa's more accurate, sharper punches.

In a matchup between two power punchers, the pair failed to hit the canvas at any point as the fighters elected to mix-it-up in spurts, a departure from Gamboa's usual whirlwind affairs.

Gamboa felt out his southpaw foe at the onset, cautious of being hit by a wild shot. As the rounds went on, the fighters started throwing more leather, but the action was never sustained and neither fighter was ever hurt, resulting in an event that was devoid of drama. Every time it seemed like a typical Gamboa firefight might break out, it was extinguished by lulls in the action, with both fighters seemingly weary of each other's power.

Ponce de Leon was more successful in the fourth, as the decided underdog started to find a home for his power combinations. Gamboa staved off the attack, though, and stormed back, trapping his opponent along the ropes and ripping combinations of his own.

The fifth round was the closest of the night, as Ponce de Leon seemed to get the better of some exchanges. Ponce de Leon picked up where he left off in round six with his best effort of the fight, as he continued to press the action, the only round The Ring saw for the southpaw.

The eighth round would be the last of the bout, as the fight saw its premature ending due to a nasty vertical gash on Ponce de Leon's forehead, the result of an accidental clash of heads. Referee Allan Huggins halted the bout at 1:24 of round eight, a stoppage that Ponce de Leon deemed "a good stoppage, it wasn't going to stop bleeding."

Judges Julie Lederman (New York) and Steve Weisfeld (New Jersey) scored it 80-72, while Shafeeq Rashada (New Jersey) scored it 79-73, all in favor of Gamboa. The Ring had the same tally as Rashada, 79-73.

The Compubox punch stats illustrated the lack of sustained action in the bout, as the pair combined for just 739 total punches thrown over less than eight completed rounds. Gamboa connected on 42 percent of his power shots, while Ponce de Leon landed 35 percent.

The bout might end up being Gamboa's last at 126, as he said immediately after the fight, "I don't know if I'm going to fight at 130 or 135, I don't know yet. But I'm not fighting at 126 anymore."

Mike Coppinger

MATCH STATS

DIVISION: Featherweight
LOCATION: Atlantic City, N.J.
DATE: Sept. 10, 2011
TELEVISION: HBO
PROMOTERS: Top Rank, Golden Boy Promotions
REFEREE: Allan Huggins (New Jersey)

YURIORKIS GAMBOA
AGE: 29
WEIGHT: 127
RESIDENCE: Miami
BIRTHPLACE: Guantanamo, Cuba
RECORD: 21-0 (16)
RING RANKING: 1

DANIEL PONCE DE LEON
AGE: 31
WEIGHT: 127
RESIDENCE: Huntington Park, Calif.
BIRTHPLACE: Ciudad Cuauhtemoc, Mexico
RECORD: 41-4 (34)
RING RANKING: 5

LUIS CRUZ TKO 6
ANTONIO DAVIS

The barren 130-pound division might have received an injection Sept. 10 in Atlantic City, N.J, as Puerto Rican prospect Cruz announced his arrival on the world stage with a comprehensive six-round shellacking of former world-title challenger Davis.

The 39-year-old trialhorse represented the sternest test of the 25-year-old Cruz's career, having faced the likes of Humberto Soto, Jhonny Gonzalez, Steven Luevano and Joan Guzman over the years. The bout was never competitive, however, as the outgunned Davis had nothing to keep his foe – 14 years his junior – off him.

Cruz set out to establish his jab from the onset, firing his piston-like stick through Davis' guard early and often. In the second round, Cruz was credited with a knockdown of Davis, though it could have been viewed as a slip.

Cruz continued to have his way with Davis, asserting himself with dominant round after dominant round, brutalizing the Atlanta resident with an array of uppercuts, lead hooks and body shots. In the fifth, Cruz dropped Davis for the second time, the result of a right uppercut. Following the knockdown, Cruz jumped on the badly hurt Davis in an effort to close the show.

Davis made it out of the round on unsteady legs, but the fight wouldn't last much longer. The end came at 1:39 of round six when Cruz put Davis down for the third and final time, the result of a dazzling right uppercut that put Davis flat on his back. Referee David Fields didn't bother to count, as Davis was out and would remain on the canvas for some time.

The bout was on the untelevised portion of the HBO card headlined by Yuriorkis Gamboa-Daniel Ponce de Leon, although HBO did show highlights of Cruz's eye-catching performance.

With the impressive victory, Cruz moves toward his HBO debut, as he will open up the Manny Pacquiao-Juan Manuel Marquez III pay-per-view telecast Nov. 12. Cruz said afterward: "I will continue to show the world that I am ready for the biggest of challenges."

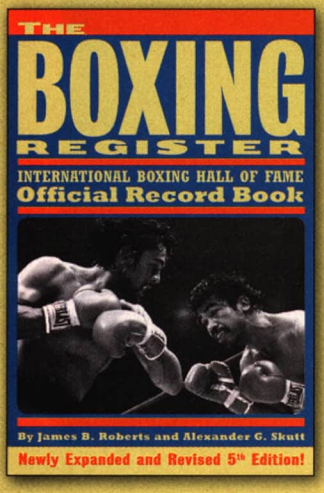
Mike Coppinger

MATCH STATS

DIVISION: Junior lightweight
LOCATION: Atlantic City, N.J.
DATE: Sept. 10, 2011
PROMOTERS: Top Rank, Miguel Cotto Promotions
REFEREE: David Fields (New Jersey)

LUIS CRUZ
AGE: 25
WEIGHT: 131½
RESIDENCE: Las Piedras, Puerto Rico
BIRTHPLACE: Las Piedras, Puerto Rico
RECORD: 19-0 (15)

ANTONIO DAVIS
AGE: 39
WEIGHT: 132
RESIDENCE: Chester, S.C.
BIRTHPLACE: Atlanta
RECORD: 28-7 (13)



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ANDRE BERTO KO 5
JAN ZAVECK

Less than five months after losing the WBC belt to Victor Ortiz, Andre Berto regained a portion of the welterweight title by pounding IBF titlist Jan Zaveck's face into a bloody, swollen mess, prompting Zaveck's corner and the ringside physician to end matters between rounds five and six at the Beau Rivage Resort and Casino.

Virtually all of the damage was inflicted during the final 90 seconds as Berto's short, crisp punches opened cuts over both of Zaveck's eyes and raised a purplish knot underneath the right orb. Zaveck wanted to continue but his seconds determined the damage was too severe. With waves of anger, frustration and disappointment surging through him, a crestfallen Zaveck sunk to his haunches along the ropes before accepting condolences from a ringsider.

Meanwhile, Berto was exultant, and he had reason to be. His customary fast-twitch bursts were accompanied by a ferocity borne of a determination to regain what he'd lost. This fan-friendly performance, combined with his sensational war with Ortiz, has reshaped Berto's reputation in a positive way.

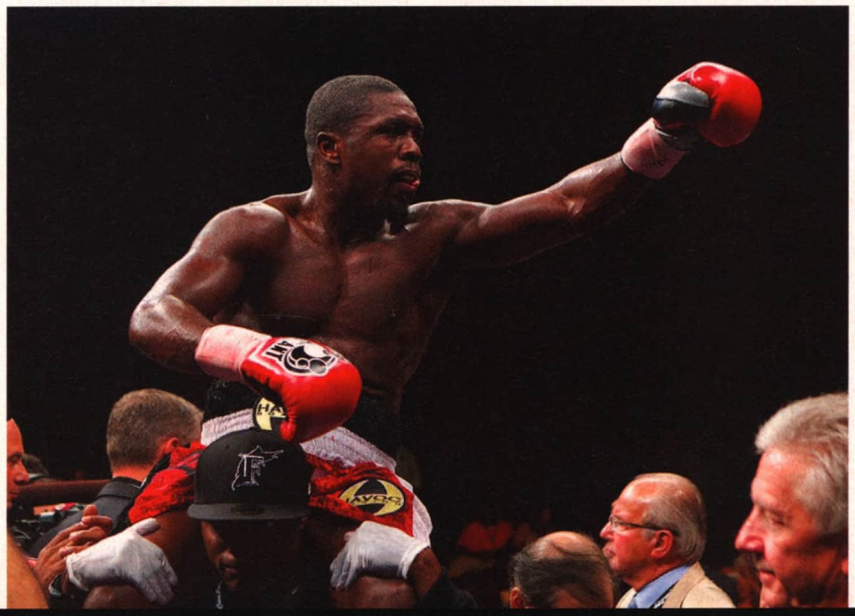
Berto took the fight to Zaveck from the start by burrowing in behind flashy flurries, but Zaveck answered with several effective overhand rights. Berto blasted the body with both hands and fired pinpoint jabs to force Zaveck back while the dogged Slovenian advanced behind piercing jabs, looping rights and double hooks to the face.

The pulsating action continued in round two, with Berto's speed and Zaveck's tenacity meshing well. Each man produced instant responses to his rival's attacks, and the results were pleasing to the eye. Berto pushed Zaveck to the ropes in round two and unloaded a triple hook, but Zaveck's precision power shots enabled him to carry the rest of the round. The third was more of the same, with Berto pushing the pace and connecting with thunderous combinations and Zaveck countering effectively at every turn.

The fourth was Zaveck's best as he closed the distance and fired scything shots to the ribs and well-targeted right uppercuts to the face. A long, competitive fight appeared certain, but the events of round five created an anti-climactic conclusion.

Andre Berto regained a piece of the welterweight title by stopping Jan Zaveck in five rounds.

Berto, who humbly rated his performance as "so-so," eagerly looked toward an Ortiz rematch while the gallant and gracious Zaveck will be forced to pick up the pieces. It's highly unlikely, however, that the powers that be will grant Zaveck the same quick turnaround Berto received.



MATCH STATS

DIVISION: Welterweight
LOCATION: Biloxi, Miss.
DATE: Sept. 3, 2011
TELEVISION: HBO
EVENT PROMOTER: DiBella Entertainment
REFEREE: Fred Steinwinder III (Mississippi)

ANDRE BERTO

AGE: 27
WEIGHT: 146¾
RESIDENCE: Winter Haven, Florida
BIRTHPLACE: Miami, Florida
RECORD: 28-1 (22)
RING RANKING: 3

JAN ZAVECK

AGE: 35
WEIGHT: 146½
RESIDENCE: Magdeburg, Germany
BIRTHPLACE: Ptuj, Slovenia
RECORD: 31-2 (18)
RING RANKING: 5

KOKI KAMEDA W 12
DAVID DE LA MORA

Japanese southpaw Kameda barely kept his bantamweight belt as he floored previously unbeaten Mexican De La Mora in the third, but became inexplicably cautious in the later rounds and barely earned a hairline unanimous verdict over 12 rounds at Nihon Bukokan.

Kameda, making his second defense since acquiring the vacant WBA belt by beating Alexander Munoz last December, had a tough time coping with his slightly younger foe throughout the contest. De La Mora didn't have enough power to dethrone the champ, but he showed good hand speed and heart.

Kameda was in command in the first two rounds thanks to his precision in countering De La Mora. In round three De La Mora turned so aggressive that Kameda was pinned to the ropes, though he covered up with a peek-a-boo guard that deflected most of incoming shots. Kameda then caught De La Mora with a southpaw left hook that floored the challenger. De La Mora promptly pulled himself up, but he was more wary of Kameda's counters from that point on.

Somewhere in that frantic third round, Kameda suffered a gash under the left eyebrow. It might have explained why Kameda was cautious and passive the rest of the way, despite a big early lead on the scorecards.

De La Mora threw punches like a human windmill, though he did so without precision. Most of his shots hit the air or the beltholder's gloves. Meanwhile, Kameda became very defensive and seldom threw punches in combination, allowing De La Mora to dominate three rounds in four sessions after the third simply because of his aggressiveness. Kameda limited himself to counter attempts.

Encouraged by his chief second Eduardo Montiel (Fernando's older brother), Kameda became more aggressive in the eighth but failed to do any damage. Kameda also took the ninth with fewer but more-accurate combinations. De La Mora was in command in the 10th and 11th, but Kameda controlled the final session with his fine display of versatile combinations that he apparently saved for the late rounds.

The official tallies were as follows: Ricardo Duncan (Panama) 114-113, Carlos Sucre (USA) 115-113, and Pinit Prayadsab (Japan) 115-112, all in favor of Kameda. "I'm not satisfied with my performance today," Kameda said. "De La Mora was a young and good challenger. I couldn't show my best, but I'll do more training and give a better showing next time."

De La Mora actually felt he should have thrown more punches. "If I would have punched more, I could have won this match," he said. "Kameda won't give me another chance to fight him, as he realized my real power."

Joe Koizumi

MATCH STATS

DIVISION: Bantamweight
LOCATION: Tokyo
DATE: Aug. 31, 2011
PROMOTER: Kameda Promotions
REFEREE: Raul Caiz Jr. (USA)

KOKI KAMEDA
AGE: 24
WEIGHT: 118
RESIDENCE: Tokyo
BIRTHPLACE: Osaka, Japan
RECORD: 26-1 (16)
RING RANKING: 8

DAVID DE LA MORA
AGE: 23
WEIGHT: 118
RESIDENCE: Tijuana, Mexico
BIRTHPLACE: Tijuana, Mexico
RECORD: 23-1 (16)

TOMONOBU SHIMIZU
W 12 HUGO CAZARES

The previously unrated Shimizu shook up the 115-pound picture as he stunned Cazares, who entered with the top spot in The Ring rankings, over 12 hard-fought and gory sessions at Nihon Budokan. The slick-punching Japanese speedster utilized his faster footwork and longer reach to dominate the early and late rounds and eke out a split-but-popular decision.

The third time was the charm for Shimizu, who earned the WBA belt with the win. In previous tries at world-title belts, he was stopped by Pongsaklek Wonjongkam in 2007 in Thailand and suffered a come-from-behind KO against Daisuke Naito in 2008 in Tokyo — both in cracks at the WBC 112-pound strap.

Shimizu, who enjoyed a two-inch height advantage, made a fine start. He used sharp lefts and left-right combinations to win the opening round, though he suffered a gash on the bridge of his nose as the result of an accidental head butt.

Cazares was making his fifth defense of the belt he won in Japan by decisioning Nobuo Nashiro in May 2010. He looked rather sluggish and slow in the first three rounds, while Shimizu appeared to have the edge with his stick-and-move tactics.

Cazares opened up in the fourth, when he moved forward furiously and worked the midsection to hamper the taller Shimizu's mobility. Cazares became increasingly aggressive in the fifth and sixth rounds as the tide turned completely in his favor. He forcibly swept the fourth through seventh sessions, but sustained a laceration at the left eyelid midway through round five that kept bleeding until the end of the contest.

The eighth was a strange turning point, as Cazares fiercely attacked his retreating opponent with wild combinations at the start of the round, then abruptly stopped punching and began backpedaling after apparently running out of gas. Shimizu took advantage as he began to stalk the fading Mexican. Shimizu resumed throwing good lefts and maintained the pressure to win another point in the ninth.

As the scores narrowed, Cazares appeared more tired than Shimizu in the last three rounds. Shimizu kept his distance and threw jabs and one-two combinations. The two mixed it up and repeated hit-and-grab tactics, but it was the firmly determined Shimizu who was in command in the last two sessions, which proved to be the difference on the cards. Raul Caiz Jr. (USA) and Ricardo Duncan (Panama) both scored it 115-113 for Shimizu, while Carlos Sucre (USA) had it 116-114 for Cazares.

A jubilant Shimizu said, "The key to my win is that I stood and fought against the champ. In the near future I may have a possibility to move down to my legitimate flyweight class to acquire a second world belt."

"Shimizu often came on with his head forward, so I suffered some facial cuts that bothered me," a dejected Cazares said. "I wanted to move up to the bantamweight class because of my weight problems but may stay in this division to get revenge on Shimizu."

Joe Koizumi

MATCH STATS

DIVISION: Junior bantamweight
LOCATION: Tokyo
DATE: AUG. 31, 2011
PROMOTER: Kameda Promotions
REFEREE: Pinit Prayadsab (Thailand)

TOMONOBU SHIMIZU
AGE: 30
WEIGHT: 115
RESIDENCE: Tokyo
BIRTHPLACE: Fukui, Japan
RECORD: 19-3-1 (9)
RING RANKING: 2

HUGO CAZARES
AGE: 33
WEIGHT: 115
RESIDENCE: Los Mochis, Mexico
BIRTHPLACE: Los Mochis, Mexico
RECORD: 35-7-2 (25)
RING RANKING: 3

ALEXANDER POVETKIN W 12 RUSLAN CHAGAEV

Punching philosophy was a crucial subject in this historic university town. For their featured roles on the live broadcast's quartet of highly rated heavyweight contenders – including Robert Helenius vs. Sergei Liakovich (see next entry) – Povetkin and Chagaev each looked like they did their homework. It appeared that last-minute tutorials by visiting professor Teddy Atlas in Povetkin's corner probably made the difference in what started as a close, give-and-take affair.

The statistically similar pair of Eastern Europeans often fought like mirror images, right down to their all-black attire. Chagaev carried heavier hands and looked like a bear coming out of hibernation as he found openings and scored early with deceivingly quick hooks.

Povetkin looked competent on his toes as he shuffled in and out behind probing combinations. Chagaev showed versatility with overhead counter shots. There was consistently good action, and the Messehalle crowd, including dozens of Russian visitors at ringside, cheered loudly and clearly in German.

After four frames, the bout was basically even. Chagaev matched the faster, slicker Povetkin's activity well. After Chagaev continued to surprise Povetkin with quick, stinging leads, Povetkin appeared unsure of himself. Atlas looked frantic as Chagaev scored clubbing lefts through the middle rounds. Chagaev's punches never really hurt Povetkin, but they kept Povetkin from mounting a significant offense.

By round eight it seemed Chagaev might surge to a big upset win, but he couldn't maintain the pressure. Povetkin found a useful tool in uppercut, right-cross combinations and eventually pulled away.

Before the ninth, Atlas inspired his charge with a reminder of how Povetkin could dedicate the win to his recently deceased father. "I knew at some point it was the right thing to say," Atlas mused afterward. Indeed, Povetkin managed a slight second-wind rally, and stayed busier.

Povetkin picked off most of Chagaev's closing flurries. Chagaev's rumbling responses came fewer and farther between down the stretch. When Povetkin tagged Chagaev in the 10th with a trio of textbook uppercuts, it was highlight reel stuff.

Determined-but-desperate Chagaev caught Povetkin with some heavy leather during an exciting and even 11th round. Povetkin weathered Chagaev's last gasp and was trading well by the end of the final frame. For Povetkin, it was merely a matter of avoiding disaster after that. Chagaev kept it interesting and chased Povetkin with three rights as time expired, but the outcome was clear.

Neither fighter showed any damage. Jean-Francis Toupin (France) and Paul Thomas (England) agreed at 117-113, while Glenn Feldman (USA) had it 116-112, all for Povetkin. The Ring saw it 116-114 for Povetkin.

For what it's worth, Povetkin earned what the WBA calls its "regular" belt with the win. Wladimir Klitschko is the real WBA titleholder.

"I showed I can win a tough fight against a very strong opponent," the unmarked Povetkin said. "I'm proud of this title but I know I'm not the best until I beat a Klitschko."

Phil Woolever

MATCH STATS

DIVISION: Heavyweight
LOCATION: Erfurt, Germany
DATE: Aug. 27, 2011
PROMOTERS: Sauerland Event, Universum, Main Events
REFEREE: Hubert Earle (Canada)

ALEXANDER POVETKIN
AGE: 32
WEIGHT: 231½
RESIDENCE: Chekhov, Russia
BIRTHPLACE: Kursk, Russia
RECORD: 22-0 (15)
RING RANKING: 2

RUSLAN CHAGAEV
AGE: 32
WEIGHT: 231½
RESIDENCE: Hamburg, Germany
BIRTHPLACE: Andijan, Uzbekistan
RECORD: 27-2-1 (17)
RING RANKING: 9

ROBERT HELENIUS KO 9 SERGEI LIAKHOVICH

Helenius propelled himself to the front of the line for the next heavyweight sweepstakes with a dramatic stoppage of willing-but-outgunned Liakhovich, who simply had no answer for Helenius' sweeping firepower. "Nordic Nightmare" Helenius lived up to his moniker and roared out behind big overhand rights and sweeping inside hooks that soon made Liakhovich a bloody mess at Messehalle.

Liakhovich managed a bit of early success with jabs that slipped inside the arc of Helenius' punches, but the sheer volume of looping hooks soon had Liakhovich's profile looking bruised and tenderized. Helenius seemed a bit surprised when Liakhovich endured the extended onslaught, but he never let up on the pressure, confident that sooner or later something had to give.

By the third round Liakhovich was bleeding profusely from a nose that was subsequently diagnosed as being broken in two places, probably during round two. If they gave points for brave durability, Liakhovich might have scored better. But as it was, he got creamed and shut out.

Liakhovich became a bloody mess, but he never stopped trying. The pair traded vicious body shots and rocking upstairs combinations, and Liakhovich hung tough, rocking Helenius with solid counters. Still, by the fifth round it was obvious to everybody in the place except Liakhovich that it was only a matter of time before Helenius lowered the boom.

Almost everything Helenius threw was a power punch, and just about everything landed flush. While Liakhovich did illustrate that Helenius still has defensive flaws, there was nothing Liakhovich could really do to exploit them. Helenius definitely subscribes to the "good offense is good defense" theory, and he has plenty of two-handed offense.

Uppercuts were the primary weapon that busted Liakhovich up. Whenever it looked like the fight might be stopped, Liakhovich fought back enough to earn himself more thumps. After piling on punishment in the sixth and seventh sessions, Helenius showed savage persistence in the eighth and forced Liakhovich to a knee under a rain of heavy hands.

Finally, in the ninth, concussive reality set in. Helenius quickly slammed in a huge uppercut that had an almost cartoonish impact on the painfully contorted Liakhovich's frame. A half dozen follow-up finishers put Liakhovich into a face-first fall as ref Stanley Christodoulou waved things off. The official time was 0:19, but the contest could have been called off a couple of rounds earlier.

"I started slowly but my coach (Ulli Wegner) woke me up, and this is another big win for me," Helenius said.

With his similar destruction of Samuel Peter, the 6-foot-6½ Helenius has made an impact with fans as a fighter big and aggressive enough to tangle with the Klitschkos.

Phil Woolever

MATCH STATS

DIVISION: Heavyweight
LOCATION: Erfurt, Germany
DATE: Aug. 27, 2011
PROMOTERS: Sauerland Event, Universum, Main Events
REFEREE: Stanley Christodoulou (South Africa)

ROBERT HELENIUS
AGE: 27
WEIGHT: 243½
RESIDENCE: Helsinki, Finland
BIRTHPLACE: Stockholm, Sweden
RECORD: 16-0 (11)
RING RANKING: 6

SERGEI LIAKHOVICH
AGE: 35
WEIGHT: 232
RESIDENCE: Scottsdale, Ariz.
BIRTHPLACE: Vitebsk, Belarus
RECORD: 25-4 (16)

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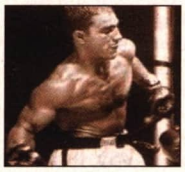

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SURIYAN SOR RUNGVISAI W12
TOMAS ROJAS

Sor Rungvisai scored a minor upset at Khunmuangsri Stadium in Srisaket, Thailand by winning a clear-cut 12-round decision over Rojas, The Ring's second-rated 115-pounder and WBC junior bantamweight champion. Sor Rungvisai is probably best known for losing a close decision to The Ring flyweight champion Pongsaklek Wonjongkam last October.

Rojas had been in with a host of excellent fighters, including: Vic Darchiniyan, Anselmo Moreno, Gerry Penalosa, Jorge Arce, Christian Mijares and Rosendo Alvarez. He clearly had the edge in experience; however, he failed to conquer any of these fighters and was clearly more shopworn than the younger Sor Rungvisai. Despite this, most in Thailand considered the southpaw Rojas to be the favorite.

Both fighters came out of the blocks tentatively with the lanky, 5-foot-8 Rojas pumping his right jab in the face of Sor Rungvisai, looking for openings, while the Thai bobbed and weaved, crouched low and fired away with his straight-right, left-hook counters.

At 5-foot-3, the bullish Sor Rungvisai looked to be the stronger of the two fighters. As rounds progressed, however, he demonstrated that he was the faster, more skilled of the two. Round after round, Sor Rungvisai landed straight rights and left hooks before sliding out and underneath the right hooks of Rojas. After four rounds, the open scoring showed as: 40-36, 40-36, and 39-37, all in favor of the Thai.

Though Rojas had his moments, by the eighth round Sor Rungvisai was growing in confidence and boxing smartly. Each time the Mexican fighter picked up the pace, the challenger would counter with two or even three straight right hands mixed with a left hook for good measure, and then skip out of danger. Rojas simply did not have the speed to cope with his Thai challenger.

Rojas came on in the 10th and 11th rounds but failed to change the course of the fight, landing nothing of significance. Though he was never out of the fight and gave a decent showing, at times he looked old and slow and seemed on his way to a lower tier of the sport.

The judge's scores: Takeaki Kanaya (Japan) 115-114, Daniel Van de Wiele (Belgium) 116-112, and Burt Clements (USA) 117-111. The Ring had it 117-111. Though Sor Rungvisai lacks knockout power, his scrappy, slick style should serve him well in future bouts. At just 22 years of age, he is still improving. Sor Rungvisai is scheduled to fight again late in 2011. For whatever reasons, Rojas is interested in a rematch.

Scott Mallon

MATCH STATS

DIVISION: Junior bantamweight
LOCATION: Srisaket, Thailand
DATE: Aug. 19, 2011
PROMOTER: Nakornluang Promotions
REFEREE: Jack Reiss (USA)

SURIYAN SOR RUNGVISAI
AGE: 22
WEIGHT: 115
RESIDENCE: Bangkok, Thailand
BIRTHPLACE: Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand
RECORD: 19-5-1 (7)
RING RANKING: 4

TOMAS ROJAS
AGE: 31
WEIGHT: 115
RESIDENCE: Veracruz, Mexico
BIRTHPLACE: Veracruz, Mexico
RECORD: 36-13-1 (24)
RING RANKING: 5

IMAGES: SUMIO YAMADA / CHRIS FARINA / TOP RANK

Tomasz Adamek failed in his bid to wrest the WBC heavyweight title from Vitali Klitschko. leaving all the belts in one family.

HEAVYWEIGHTS

ROBERT HELENIUS KO 9 SERGEI LIAKHOVICH
ALEXANDER POVETKIN W 12 RUSLAN CHAGAEV
DEONTAY WILDER KO 2 DOMINIQUE ALEXANDER
SAUL FARAH TECH. WIN 3 ROSENDO MERCADO
VITALI KLITSCHKO KO 10 TOMASZ ADAMEK
JOHNATHON BANKS KO 6 IVICA BACURIN
SETH MITCHELL KO 3 HECTOR FERREYRO
TYSON FURY KO 5 NICOLAI FIRTHA

CRUISERWEIGHTS

IAGO KILADZE W 12 DANIEL ALEJANDRO SANABRIA
ERIC FIELDS KO 2 RUBIN WILLIAMS
LATEEF KAYODE W 10 FELIX CORA JR.
MATEUSZ MASTERNAK KO 3 CARL DAVIS
OLA AFOLABI W 8 LUKASZ RUSIEWICZ
GIULIAN ILIE KO 2 SALVATORE ERITTU

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

HANY ATIYO W 12 MAHMOUD SULEIMAN
KWESI JONES KO 9 CLEVELAND FRASER
TONY AVERLANT KO 11 ARTUR HEIN
PAWEL GLAZEWSKI W 10 DOUDOU NGUMBU

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

KAROLY BALZSAY W 12 STANYSLAV KASHTANOV
EZEQUIEL OSVALDO MADERNA KO 3 JORGE RODRIGUEZ OLIVERA
LIBRADO ANDRADE KO 3 MATT O'BRIEN
ENRIQUE ORNELAS W 10 ALFREDO CONTRERAS
SERGE YANNICK KO 2 JAMIE PITTMAN
FRANCIS CHEKA W 10 MADA MAUGO
THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN W 12 AARON PRYOR JR.
PAUL SMITH KO 1 PAUL SAMUELS

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

MATTEO SIGNANI W 10 LORENZO COSSEDDU
DEREK HINKEY KO 2 ANTHONY BARTINELLI
DANIEL GEALE W 12 EROMOSELE ALBERT
MARCO ANTONIO RUBIO KO 5 MOHAMMED AKRONG

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS

MICHEL ROSALES W 10 JULIO CESAR GARCIA
LUCIANO LEONEL CUELLO W 12 CARLOS WILFREDO VILCHES
GABRIEL ROSADO W 10 KEENAN COLLINS
CHARLIE OTA W 12 YOSHIHISA TONIMURA

WELTERWEIGHTS

VIACHESLAV SENCHENKO KO 6 MARCO ANTONIO AVENDANO
FREDRICK LAWSON KO 1 WAHAB ADEBISI
JESUS SELIG KO 4 LUIS GONZALEZ
KEVIN MCINTYRE W 10 GARY MCMILLAN
OMAR CHAVEZ KO 1 ALBERTO MARTINEZ
JORGE PAEZ JR. KO 3 RODRIGO JUAREZ
ANDRE BERTO TECH. WIN 5 JAN ZAVECK
RANDALL BAILEY W 10 YORYI ESTRELLA
TEERACHAI KRATINGDAENGGYM W 12 DAN NAZARENO JR.
VINCENT ARROYO W 10 HECTOR SANCHEZ
GIUSEPPE LANGELLA W 10 ROCCO DI PALMO
ANTON NOVIKOV W 10 DAVID MAKARADZE
FELIX DIAZ W 8 LARRY SMITH
FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. KO 4 VICTOR ORTIZ
CARSON JONES TECH. WIN 7 SAID OUALI

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS

FRANKIE GOMEZ W 8 ADRIAN GRANADOS
CESAR RENE CUENCA W 10 SERGIO OMAR PRIOTTI
HUMBERTO SOTO KO 2 JOSE ALFARO
MONICA SILVINA ACOSTA W 10 ERIN MCGOWAN
ANTONIO PITALUA W12 COSME RIVERA
PAUL MCCLOSKEY W 12 BREIDIS PRESCOTT
JOSE BENAVIDEZ KO 1 DEDRICK BELL
ERIK MORALES TECH. WIN 10 PABLO CESAR CANO
JESSIE VARGAS W 10 JOSESITO LOPEZ

LIGHTWEIGHTS

ALEX ARTHUR KO 4 ALEKSANDER VAKHTANGASHVILI
JOSE A GONZALEZ KO 1 EDDIE SOTO
AGALI ALYSHEV W 12 NUGZAR MARGVELASHVILI
RAYMUNDO BELTRAN KO 2 DARIEN FORD
ANTONIO ESCALANTE KO 1 PIPINO CUEVAS JR.
MERCITO GESTA W 10 MANUEL PEREZ

Lightweight contender Mercito Gesta outpointed Manuel Perez on Sept. 17 in Parker, Ariz.

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS

JOSE FELIX JR. KO 4 ARTURO GUTIERREZ
RICKY SISMUNDO W 10 BALWEG BANGOYAN
JOSENILSON DOS SANTOS KO 3 IDIOZAN MATOS
ELOY PEREZ KO 2 DANIEL JIMENEZ
SEIICHI OKADA W 10 KOTA SUZUSHINO
FRIDA WALLBERG W 10 OLIVIA GERULA
JUAN CARLOS SALGADO W 12 ARGENIS MENDEZ
LUIS CRUZ KO 6 ANTONIO DAVIS
AMANDA SERRANO KO 2 KIMBERLY CONNOR
MIGUEL ROMAN KO 1 ANTONIO MEZA
RONALD PONTILLAS W 12 JUN TALAPE
ELIO ROJAS KO 8 ARTURO GOMEZ
SAUL ALVAREZ KO 6 ALFONSO GOMEZ

FEATHERWEIGHTS

OLEH YEFIMOVYCH W 12 CRISTIAN PALMA
CHRISTOPHER PEREZ W 10 HECTOR JAVIER MARQUEZ
SERGIO VILLANUEVA KO 7 JOSE MENDOZA
CHONLATARN PIRIYAPINYO KO 6 ROEL LAGUNA
GARY RUSSELL JR. W 8 LEONILO MIRANDA
EDGAR RIOVALLE KO 3 LIZARDO MORENO
YURIORKIS GAMBOA TECH. WIN 8 DANIEL PONCE DE LEON
JHONNY GONZALEZ KO 2 ROGERS MTAGWA
ROBINSON CASTELLANOS KO 2 ALDIMAR SILVA SANTOS

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS

CHANTTALL MARTINEZ W 10 MARYLIN HERNANDEZ
THANGTHONG KIATTAWEESUK KO 5 FRANCIS MIYEYUSHO

BANTAMWEIGHTS

KOKI KAMEDA W 12 DAVID DE LA MORA
VIC DARCHINYAN W 12 EVANS MBAMBA
JAMIE MCDONNELL W 12 STUART HALL
FELIPE ORUCUTA KO 5 DEVIS PEREZ

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS

MINIYAKHE SITYATA KO 8 MNCEDI YOKOSE
YAQUB KAREEM KO 7 COBBINA JOHNSON
LUIS MALDONADO KO 2 JAVIER ROMANO
TOMONOBU SHIMIZU W 12 HUGO FIDEL CAZARES
JULIO CEJA KO 1 ALEJANDRO MORALES
REY PEREZ W 10 RODEL QUILATON
ISACK JUNIOR W 12 BERT BATAWANG

FLYWEIGHTS

PETCH SOR CHITPATTANA KO 3 DIAO MA
MARIANA JUAREZ W 10 ASAMI SHIKASHO
DANIEL LOZANO KO 2 JONATHAN ARIAS
MILAN MELINDO TECH. WIN 10 FRANCISCO ROSAS
JULIO CESAR MIRANDA TECH. WIN 3 LUIS CARLOS LEON

JR. FLYWEIGHTS

YODMONGKOL VOR SAENGTHEP KO 3 SHENG PENG
ULISES SOLIS W 12 JETHER OLIVA
LUIS ALBERTO LAZARTE W 12 NERYS ESPINOZA
CARLOS RUBEN DARIO RUIZ KO 7 ADRIAN EDUARDO MENDOZA
JESSICA CHAVEZ W 10 YESENIA MARTINEZ CASTREJON

STRAWWEIGHTS

MOISES FUENTES W 12 RAUL GARCIA
KATIA GUTIERREZ W 10 OLGA JULIO
PAIPHAROB KOKIETGYM KO 1 JACK AMISA
WANHENG MENAYOTHIN KO 11 JETLY PURISIMA

Team advisor Freddie Roach liked what he saw at the U.S. Olympic Trials this summer in Mobile, Ala.

IS WINNING CONTAGIOUS?

SUCCESSFUL PRO TRAINER FREDDIE ROACH IS HELPING TO INSTILL A **NEW SENSE OF OPTIMISM IN USA BOXING'S STRUGGLING PROGRAM**

WORDS: **NORM FRAUHEIM** / IMAGES: **SCOTT FOSTER / FIGHTWIRE IMAGES**

Ask Freddie Roach for his favorite American Olympic medalist and the famed trainer doesn't hesitate. "Sugar Ray Leonard," he says.

That was easy.

Not so easy is the search for a restoration of the gold standard that Leonard represented so brilliantly in 1976. After America's boycott of the Moscow Games in 1980, good U.S. teams followed, with Pernell Whitaker, Meldrick Taylor, Mark Breland, Paul Gonzales, Henry Tillman and Evander Holyfield in 1984. In 1988, there was Roy Jones Jr., Riddick Bowe, Ray Mercer and Michael Carbajal.

Since then, however, U.S. Olympic boxing has been more like the real-estate market than precious metals. U.S. boxers used to be at the top of the medal stand as frequently as Michael Phelps was at the 2008 Beijing Games. But American occupancy of the podium has been foreclosed upon, with only three gold medals over the last five Olympiads – Oscar De La Hoya in 1992, David Reid in 1996 and Andre Ward in 2004. In 2008, there was only Deontay Wilder's bronze, which had all the shine of an old penny.

"It's been a little embarrassing for America," Roach said.

An attempt to restore that shine is what brought Roach to Mobile, Ala., during the first week in August for the U.S. Olympic Trials. It's where the search began, and it continued in Colorado Springs at a training camp for the amateur World Championships, Sept. 22-Oct. 10, in Baku, Azerbaijan, the next step in qualifying for the London Olympics next summer.

Roach sat at a table, far from either corner, looking a lot like just another fan surrounded by fans. But the 1976 alternate for the Leonard-led team in Montreal was also there to work as a consultant on a staff led by U.S. coach Joe Zanders, who calls him a technical advisor. Roach agreed more than four months ago to take on the job, one of many on his crowded plate. His role was announced a few hours before he worked Manny Pacquiao's corner in a one-sided decision over Shane Mosley on May 7. In early August, it was clear he didn't want to interfere with Zanders or the fighters' personal coaches -- often fathers whose presence was a disruptive issue in 2008.

Roach was scouting and evaluating, preparing himself to counsel, encourage and teach kids who know him mostly as Pacquiao's trainer. The Pacquiao influence was there, filling the building like echoes of thunder from the late-summer storms that pounded rain

Two-time Olympian Rau'shee Warren senses an increase in optimism with trainer Freddie Roach part of USA Boxing.

off the Mobile Civic Center's aging roof.

"Put the Pacquiao on him, throw the Pacquiao at him," Cleveland lightweight Raynell Williams' coach yelled, urging his southpaw to throw the left during finals for 10 spots on the American team.

Roach's work in turning Pacquiao into perhaps the world's best fighter and Amir Khan into an emerging star is a factor that USA Boxing Executive Director Anthony Bartkowski believes will boost America's battered confidence. Zanders also hopes that Roach's presence might help the U.S. get a fairer number of clicks in computer scoring, although it's still hard to figure out how that baffling system works.

During the Mobile trials, Cincinnati flyweight Rau'shee Warren looked at Roach and began to sense a difference, an optimistic shift in tone. Warren remembers the old lesson repeated by parents who tell their kids that they are judged by their friends, their associates. The Pacquiao association is proof that Roach is a winner, a word which hasn't been associated with U.S. Olympic boxing for years.

"If he can make world champions, he can make Olympic medalists," said Warren, who was continuing his pursuit of a medal after suffering through early elimination in Athens at the 2004 Games and again four years later in Beijing.

Warren, who left Colorado Springs with his nine teammates for Azerbaijan on Sept. 17, already has worked out at Roach's Wild Card Boxing Club in Hollywood, Calif. So, too, did Williams, who failed in his bid to become a two-time Olympian in a loss to Jose Ramirez of Arenal, Calif. Throughout the months between the World Championships and opening ceremonies on July 27 in London, he'll work with Olympians at the Wild Card on a rotating schedule.

"Five at a time, a week at a time," said Roach, who liked what he saw in Mobile.

Roach has said he wants the Americans to be more aggressive, more offensive-minded. At the Wild Card, that mindset will already be there with a collection of young prospects who have learned while working alongside Pacquiao and Khan. Roach said he plans to have unbeaten Jose Benavidez Jr., Kid Chocolate and newly-signed Wale Omotoso, a Nigerian living in Australia, on-hand to work with the U.S. team as training partners, both at the Wild Card and Colorado Springs.

"Working with guys at that level is a real chance to challenge them and help them improve," he said.

Bartkowski agrees.

"If Olympians worked with the runner-ups from [the Trials], they might not repeat some of the same mistakes," Bartkowski said in Mobile. "This is a way to ramp up the training. It is a step in what I think is an innovative program."

Some of those training partners are a sure sign of how the Olympic landscape for American boxing has changed since Roach sparred with members of the Leonard-led team in 1976. A few of the best are foregoing the Olympics altogether. They are going pro. To wit: Benavidez. After winning a National Golden Gloves title, the Phoenix junior-welterweight signed with Top Rank as a 17-year-old. A chance at some good money was placed before him, then and there. Now 19, Benavidez is 13-0 as a pro.

Thirty-five years ago, Benavidez probably would have been at the Olympic Trials with a legitimate hope at winning a gold medal. But kids don't stick around for Olympic gold the way they used to. If Leonard had been born in 1992 instead of 1956, he might have skipped the Olympics, too.

There's a Pandora's Box full of reasons as to why the gold-medal dream is easier to give up on now than it was. Start with Roy Jones, Jr. He was robbed of 1988 gold in Seoul by judging later found to be fixed in East German police files, which became public after the Communist-bloc country fell. The Jones scandal led to the new scoring, judges with a computer pad instead of a scorecard. But that only seemed to lead to a further decline for the Americans, who have struggled to adjust to a digital system mastered by Eastern Europeans and older Cubans.

Increasingly, young Americans with evident talent have decided to go for the money in front of them, instead of waiting on a proven risk at Olympic gold. Even Floyd Mayweather Jr., Pacquiao's pound-for-pound rival, didn't win gold. He got bronze in the 1996 Atlanta Games and hasn't lost since then. Roach doesn't fault young fighters for foregoing the Olympics.

"No, if it's a financial decision, I understand," he said. "We probably haven't been as successful because of guys going pro."

A rebirth of American boxing at the Olympics might convince more of them to stick around. But that also could take time, which might mean more of long-term role for Roach. Some success in London could serve as the foundation for a real American resurrection in 2016 in Brazil.

Roach is the face of USA Boxing's plans. But he's also not the first pro trainer to try his hand at working with the American Olympic team. Emanuel Steward was hired to work as a coaching coordinator for the 2004 team. But Steward wasn't in the job long. He was gone before the opening ceremonies in Athens. He complained about a lack of funding and the increasing number of young American prospects who jumped to the pros at the first opportunity.

But the toughest task was dealing with the fathers and friends who are the first to coach an amateur. Young fighters are loyal and tend to listen to those who raised them. Meanwhile, human nature makes it tough for personal coaches to just let their fighters move on. In 2008, the split between coaches on the U.S. Olympic staff and the personal coaches proved to be the biggest fight in Beijing. No American won.

Roach, who is more low-key than confrontational, understands the politics and the emotions. He says he intends to deal with them by listening, rather than initiating the arguments that so often have led only to a team split into feuding camps, each with a different agenda.

"I know there a lot of politics involved in Olympic boxing," said Roach, who spent time with the team in Colorado Springs in mid-August. "I think I'm pretty good at dealing with kids and their fathers. I want their personal input. It's extremely valuable."

Roach's proven expertise might ease suspicions that Olympic coaches are trying to steal fighters from those who have been with them from the beginning.

"We want to get the personal coaches involved," Bartkowski said. "We're trying to eliminate the idea, the mystique that we're trying to steal your athlete. We know that the personal coach and athlete have had a relationship since their athlete was about knee-tall. We're not trying to break down the bond. We're trying to strengthen it with what we do at tournaments on the national level.

"Coach Zanders does it with fundamentals. Freddie does the same thing, all with fundamentals. We learn from the personal coach. And the personal coach learns from some of the best."

Time dictates that Roach has no choice but to rely on the personal coaches. For now, his primary responsibility is Pacquiao's second rematch with Juan Manuel Marquez on Nov. 12. If Pacquiao wins and continues to fight at his current schedule, there will be another one, perhaps the biggest in many years, in May against Floyd Mayweather Jr. Then, there's Khan, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., Kid Chocolate, Omotoso and his own fight throughout every moment of every day with Parkinson's.

"I like to work and I'll work until I can't," said Roach, who one day might work himself onto a list of favorite Olympians. ■

Featherweight prospect Gary Russell Jr. has all the tools to become a star, including eye-catching ferocity.

THE GIFTED FEATHERWEIGHT PROSPECT IS MOTIVATED BY HIS PAST

WORDS: **GARY RUSSELL JR.** / IMAGES: **CHRIS COZZONE / FIGHTWIREIMAGES**

He was an Olympian and one of the most accomplished U.S. amateurs of the past decade. He's currently among the hottest prospects in boxing. He has cruised through 18 pro bouts in 33 months, and is already fighting on HBO.

But Gary Russell Jr. could be better.

As kids, Russell and older brother Devaun Drayton often fought in the same tournaments. Afterward, it was all about who came away with the bigger trophy, who got named most-outstanding fighter, who had the quickest knockout. "We always had this thing about competing over who was better," said Russell Jr. "We pushed each other to the limit."

On March 10, 2004, police found Devaun, 17, in a school parking lot in Washington, D.C., dead from a fatal gunshot to the head. The murder remains unsolved. Devaun had been spending more time on the D.C. streets, and Gary Russell Sr. had bought him a plane ticket for Florida in an attempt to get him away. That flight was scheduled for March 11. Devaun was buried with the ticket in his suit pocket.

Seven years later, Russell Jr. is still drawing inspiration from the memory of his older brother and from thoughts of what might have been. Russell Jr., who was 15 at the time of the shooting, feels that Devaun would have developed into a top prospect and eventual world champ. And with Devaun there to push him, Russell Jr. said he would actually be fighting at a higher level. "If he were still here," Russell Jr. said, "I think we'd be neck and neck."

It's not as if the 23-year-old southpaw has been a disappointment. He capped a big summer when he dominated veteran featherweight Leonilo Miranda on Sept. 3 in a bout that aired on HBO's *Boxing After Dark*. The fight, which Russell Jr. won by scores of 80-72, 80-72 and 79-73, was one of the few times in recent years that HBO chose to air an eight rounder. It followed an eight-round shutout of Eric Estrada on the July 23 Amir Khan-Zab Judah undercard and a four-round stoppage of Antonio Meza in June that aired on Telefutura.

Russell Jr. (18-0, 10 knockouts), has high-powered manager Al Haymon behind him. He also has great timing, considering that the featherweight class might be the best division in boxing.

"Me, personally, I feel as though I'm 100 percent ready for Yuriorkis Gamboa now," Russell Jr. said of The Ring's top-ranked featherweight. "I don't make a decision on my own; we have a team. But I feel as though I'm 100 percent ready now. Gamboa makes a lot of mistakes that we can capitalize on. I feel like he's a regular fighter. He's a fighter who takes a lot of chances and is easy to hit."

Russell Jr. has flashy hand speed and a southpaw jab that already could be one of the best in the sport. His reflexes make him tough to tag, even as he constantly moves forward, fighting his way inside to rip off combinations before slipping away from danger. Russell Jr. is a bit small at 5-foot-5 with a 61-inch reach, but his hand speed allows him to overcome any size disadvantages.

"I think his hand speed is going to draw a lot of fans," said Russell Sr., who was the best man at his son's wedding in Sept. 24. "He does things that a lot of fighters today don't do. Gary can put together a combination, and all of the punches are hard. They're not slappers. I think that'll give people a rise, like, 'Wow, did you see that?' "

Though he didn't see action in an official bout until age 7, Russell Jr. said he was in the gym at age 3. He's one of 11 children, including nine boys. His father named seven of his boys Gary, though only Russell Jr. uses the name (the others go by their middle names). The oldest son, Gary Jones (21-2, 8 KOs) is a 33-year-old super middleweight. Younger brothers Gary Allen (21), Gary Antonio (18) and Gary Antoine (15) all fight as amateurs out of the gym Russell Sr. runs in Capitol Heights, Md. Light heavyweight great Bob Foster is a distant uncle.

"There are some little similarities," Russell Jr. said of Foster. "He was thin; he was a skinny guy. But he had a lot of power. They were amazed by how much power he could generate by being so small. That's what a lot of guys say about me."

Russell Jr. was considered one of the U.S. team's favorites to medal entering the Beijing Games. He won the 2005 U.S. Championships and National Golden Gloves at age 16, then went on to earn a bronze at the 2005 World Championships and repeat at the 2006 U.S. Championships. At the 2007 Olympic Trials, he bounced back from an opening-round loss to Roberto Marroquin to earn the 119-pound spot at the Beijing Games. Evander Holyfield, Roy Jones and Floyd Mayweather are the only other U.S. amateurs to ever earn an Olympic spot after a first-round loss in the Trials.

But on the morning of his weigh-in for his first bout in Beijing, Russell Jr. collapsed in his dorm room as a result of dehydration, never made it to the scales, and was disqualified. "The prospects of him medaling and even winning were great," said Russell Sr., whose son had wins in previous tournaments against the eventual gold medalist, Mongolia's Enkhbatyn Badar-Uugan, and the runner-up, Cuba's Yankiel Leon.

Russell Jr. said it took him a few months to recover emotionally from the disappointment. He added that all the details about what actually happened in Beijing haven't been disclosed, and that he would reveal the full story at a later date (likely after some of his younger brothers have turned pro). "It took me a little bit of time to start moving forward," Russell Jr. said of the Olympics. "It's my fuel that motivates me."

There's also the fuel that comes from another painful loss outside the ring. Devaun Drayton would have turned 24 this past year. If he'd have made that flight to Florida, maybe this story would have been about him instead of Gary Jr. Maybe it would have been about both of them.

But Devaun is gone, the Beijing Olympics are over, and Russell Jr. feels he can't move forward by looking backward. He can only take the pain and use it as fire to complement his talent and work ethic.

"It motivates me all the time," Russell Jr. said of Devaun's death. "We were always with each other. We were always side by side. We always fought together.

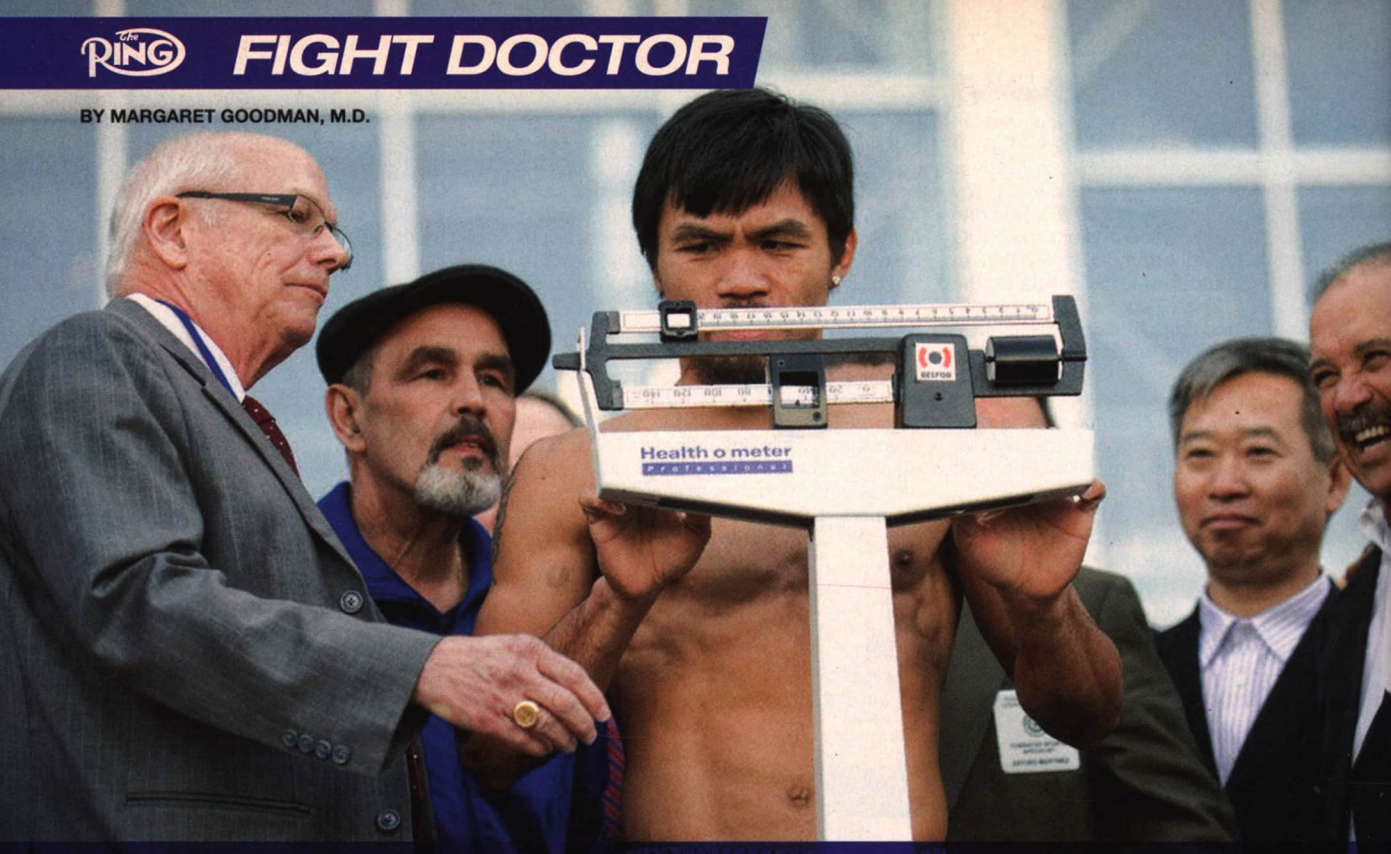
"In a sense, I feel that he's still right here." ■

PROFESSIONAL RECORD

2009			
Jan. 16	**Antonio Reyes, Tulsa, OK**	**KO**	**3**
Feb. 14	**John Wampash, Sunrise, FL**	**W**	**4**
May 1	**Alvaro Muro, Santa Ynez, CA**	**W**	**4**
Aug. 7	**Jason Jones, Primm, NV**	**KO**	**1**
Oct. 23	**Noe Lopez Jr., Laredo, TX**	**W**	**4**
Dec. 18	**Rodrigo Romero, Hinckley, MN**	**KO**	**3**
2010			
Jan. 30	**David Orosco Cano, Tunica, MS**	**KO**	**1**
Feb. 19	**Jairo Delgado, Cleveland, OH**	**KO**	**1**
April 16	**Carlos Diaz, Memphis, TN**	**KO**	**1**
June 24	**Rodrigo Aranda, Los Angeles, CA**	**KO**	**2**
July 22	**Mauricio Pastrana, Los Angeles**	**KO**	**1**
Sept. 25	**Willie Villanueva, Tunica**	**KO**	**1**
Oct. 28	**Guadalupe De Leon, Los Angeles**	**W**	**6**
2011			
Jan. 28	**Feider Viloria, San Diego, CA**	**W**	**7**
April 15	**Adolfo Landeros, San Francisco, CA**	**W**	**6**
June 17	**Antonio Meza, Hidalgo, TX**	**KO**	**4**
July 23	**Eric Estrada, Las Vegas, NV**	**W**	**8**
Sept. 3	**Leonilo Miranda, Biloxi, MS**	**W**	**8**

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
18	18	0	0	10

BY MARGARET GOODMAN, M.D.



Manny Pacquiao has fought slightly above his natural weight class the past few years. The wisdom of that philosophy is reflected in his success.

MOVE UP, NOT DOWN

BOXERS SHOULD FIGHT WHERE THEY'RE COMFORTABLE INSTEAD OF KILLING THEMSELVES TO MAKE WEIGHT

IMAGES: **NAOKI FUKUDA / CHRIS COZZONE / FIGHTWIREIMAGES**

Some fighters struggle to make the lightest weight possible because they feel they'll be at their strongest there. Smarter fighters will fight at a weight at which they're comfortable.

Trainer Freddie Roach has preached the latter, using star pupil and boxing superstar Manny Pacquiao to illustrate his point. Pacquiao once played the weight game but now fights slightly above his natural weight.

And no one can argue with the results.

"No one would argue that the worst part of boxing is making weight," Roach told The Ring from the Colorado Springs Olympic Training Center, where he has been working with USA Boxing hopefuls. "Manny was on edge if he had to miss a meal. Now that he is fighting at welterweight, he is stronger and more relaxed. He can even eat breakfast the morning of the weigh-in.

"... My amateurs check their weight every morning," Roach said. "If they don't maintain it, they go home."

Roach admits that as a fighter he was always irritable making weight. He fought most of his eight-year professional career at lightweight.

"I was mean because I was hungry! My own father wouldn't come around me before the weigh-in," he said.

The ramifications of struggling to make weight during training camp go beyond temperament, though. It can affect performance and safety.

Cutting weight by denying it necessary nutrients, intentional dehydration or with the use of drugs weakens a fighter and/or predisposes him to injury. Training camp used to be the place a boxer would hone his technique and skills; for many, it now serves as a fat farm.

Many of Roach's athletes work with elite conditioning experts. This can be valuable but the solution to this problem isn't complicated. Roach correlates the fighter's weight with their productivity. Thus, listens carefully when the boxer indicates the weight at which he feels his best. He points to Amir Khan as a clear example.

"Amir didn't have a good chin at 135," Roach said. "He (has) had to kill himself to make 140. And 147 is a more-natural weight for him. He is a different fighter at 147."

Greg Sirb, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania State Athletic Commission, agrees.

"Many boxers feel they must compete at the lowest level possible so as to be competitive yet in reality they should be competing at their optimal weight so they can be physically competitive."

Of course, the timing of the weigh-in plays a crucial role in the this discussion.

Trainer Freddie Roach said that Amir Khan is strong at 140 pounds and will be a "different fighter" at 147.

Sirb believes holding the weigh-in 24-36 hours before the fight contributes to boxers competing in the wrong weight classes.

He admits that allowing the fighter a 24-hour window to rehydrate before the fight makes sense but is disturbed by fighters who step into the ring at vastly different weights – sometimes 15, 20 pounds – after they rehydrate. Who protects the smaller guy?

"The whole idea of having weight classes is to ensure that neither fighter has a competitive advantage in weight," he said. "What is more important? How much a boxer weighs the day before the event, or what he weighs when the bell rings?"

When Roach fought, he weighed in six hours before fight time. He had 53 fights in an eight-year period, 1978-86. As a result, he never had the opportunity to balloon out of shape or gain excessive weight between bouts. On the other hand, perhaps the frequency with which he fought contributed to his developing Parkinson's disease.

How should a boxer determine his best weight?

Standardized weight charts are not helpful when determining a boxer's healthy weight, especially because muscle weighs more than fat. Sports medicine professionals often opt for measuring the percentage of body fat because it is a component of overall body composition.

But does decreasing body fat improve a boxer's performance? Or is there a better way to find the correct competition weight?

Strength and conditioning guru Dave "Scooter" Honig believes there are several ways to determine whether an athlete is overweight, or, in technical terms, "de-conditioned."

"For the everyday Joe who has never competed, measuring the Basic Metabolic Index – which uses a person's height and weight along with a resting heart rate compared to an exercise induced heart rate – might be sufficient," Honig said. "For athletes, BMI testing would result in a false positive as it doesn't take muscle mass into account. Skin fold calipers can determine the lean/fat mass ratio. This may not always be the most accurate, but is still the most economical and efficient method."

A caliper, which resembles an old-fashioned math protractor, is a device that measures the thickness of a fold of your skin with its underlying layer of fat.

"Recovery rate is a good indicator of an athlete's level of physical conditioning," said Honig, a two-time New York Times best-selling author on fitness. "In this way, you are evaluating how quickly (or slowly) an athlete recovers from an acute bout of physical exertion. This can be accomplished by taking the resting heart rate, a peak exercise heart rate at the immediate cessation of exercise, and then clocking how long it takes the subject to return to his resting heart rate."

For most boxers, weight problems begin in the amateurs. Young men and women begin their careers in their early teens but are discouraged from advancing up in weight class as their bodies mature.

They are forced to remain at weights where they no longer belong – or never belonged. Some are so talented that these weight restrictions, yo-yo diets and dehydration don't have a great impact on their performances.

Irrespective of talent, though, these unwise practices generally have a negative impact in the longrun.

Trainers, coaches and conditioning experts must carefully examine the weight class best suited to their boxer and allow him or her to move up divisions as their body changes. Ignoring where the athlete feels strongest will unnecessarily lead them to failure. ■

BRACING FOR ANOTHER CYCLONE

JESSE HART, THE SON OF '70s MIDDLEWEIGHT CYCLONE HART, IS FORGING HIS OWN LEGACY

WORDS: **MICHAEL RIVEST** / IMAGES: **KEVIN C. COX / GETTY IMAGES**

Jesse Hart knew early on that having Eugene "Cyclone" Hart for a dad was no free pass to boxing stardom. Cyclone, one of the best middleweights of the 1970s, could teach his son a lot, but every champion's journey is its own solitary hard road.

Boxing doesn't care who your father is. In fact, it might use his greatness against you, waiting until you're filled with self-doubt, then whisper to you with a cold voice in your head: "You're not your dad, kid. You don't have the sand for this."

A two-time national champion and the 2012 U.S. Olympic Team designee at 165 pounds, Hart has heard that voice more than once in his 22 years, but each time, he bit down on his mouthpiece and moved forward, proving his worth on his own, voices be damned.

First, some history.

"When he was still in his crib," Cyclone said, "I put in the gloves I wore in the first Bennie Briscoe fight, and just left them there." In case you don't know, Hart-Briscoe I was a war, a draw that would have been THE RING Magazine's 1975 "Fight of the Year" had it not been for the "Thrilla in Manila."

But it was just a pair of gloves in a crib, you say, not some leather Excalibur transferring divine power to a chosen one. Fine, just don't tell that to Jesse.

"Those gloves became part of me," he said. "The smell, everything. When I got bigger, I used to wear them around the house before my arms were strong enough to hold them up. By the time I was 7, I was going to the gym with my dad every day."

"He was a hyper kid," Cyclone said. "I started out taking him along just to tire him out."

When they'd get to the ABC Recreational Center at 26th and Master Street in Philadelphia's tough north side, Cyclone would get busy. He had fighters to train. But soon, one of them was young Jesse.

"He really wanted it," his dad said. "He had lots of desire."

Desire is easy; it's commitment that comes with a price. "I had no childhood," Hart said. "I couldn't even play on the playground like

other kids."

What made him press on? "My dad didn't pressure me; he just said, 'If you don't box, what will you be remembered for?'" The word "legacy" is not typically in the vocabulary of a 10 or 15-year-old.

"But it mattered to me to hear those words from my dad," Hart said. "It felt like destiny."

So he let his youth go – first the playground, then the friends, and later, the girls. "There just wasn't time," he said.

Destiny took Hart a long way in a short time, as he chalked up one win after another. Then, after 12 years under the watchful eye of the Cyclone, Hart ventured to Northern Michigan University to work under the former Olympic Team Head Coach Al Mitchell.

"I wanted him to get out of Philadelphia and see more competition," Cyclone said.

But in April 2009, destiny felt more like a dead end. It was the Milwaukee Regional Golden Gloves and the first of five times he would meet a Bennie Briscoe nemesis of his own: Milwaukee's great amateur, Luis Arias.

"I went down in the first round and coach Mitchell stopped it. It was devastating to me, devastating, the kind of loss that could have made me quit," said Hart, his voice still conveying the moment's anguish.

"If I had to pin down the second I knew I could be a champion, that was it," he continued. "It was up to me – and nobody else -- to come back from that."

A month later, he met Arias a second time at the 2009 U.S. Nationals. "I dropped him in the 2nd round. I can't tell you what that felt like."

Hart would face Arias three more times in his career, losing twice but defeating him in the finals of the August 2011 Olympic Trials. But that first loss taught him something. "I was tougher, better and more mature because of it. Losses teach you."

That last observation would prove sadly prophetic. Not all of challenges come inside a 20-foot-by-20-foot roped in space. In fact, the tougher ones are often outside the ropes, in the real world.

Hart's next test would threaten not only his career, but his life. In January 2010, he was dropped again, but this time by something worse than a straight right hand. His older brother Damon was shot and killed for the sin of being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

In north Philly, danger is never far away, not even for somebody like Damon, who never bothered anyone. "He was the last person to start trouble," Hart said.

"My dad is everything to me, but Damon, he was my inspiration," Hart said, his voice still evincing the freshness of the wound. "He was classy and smart. Everybody looked up to him."

"Whenever I'd fight somewhere, people wouldn't say, 'Hey, Jesse won.' They'd say, 'Damon's little brother won.' That's who I was in my neighborhood. Damon's little brother. It's still that way."

But that loss changed Jesse Hart. "I became very angry. I stopped caring about boxing. I just lost it."

The elite boxer on the U.S. National Team and Olympic Team prospect, a young man whose future was about as bright as it could get, now had a darker mission: "I started carrying guns. I went looking for the one who did this to my brother."

"IF I HAD TO PIN DOWN THE SECOND I KNEW I COULD BE A CHAMPION, THAT WAS IT. **IT WAS UP TO ME – AND NOBODY ELSE - TO COME BACK FROM THAT."**

He kept all of this to himself. No one in his world knew the dangerous turn his life had taken – almost no one, that is. He did tell Starletta, a young woman who loves him very much. "I tell Starletta everything."

"Jesse was so broken," Starletta said, "but I knew what he was feeling and how important it was that I be strong for him and tell him, 'No, I won't let you do this to yourself, to us, to Damon's memory.'"

It took some time and a lot of love from a woman with wisdom beyond her years, but Hart came back.

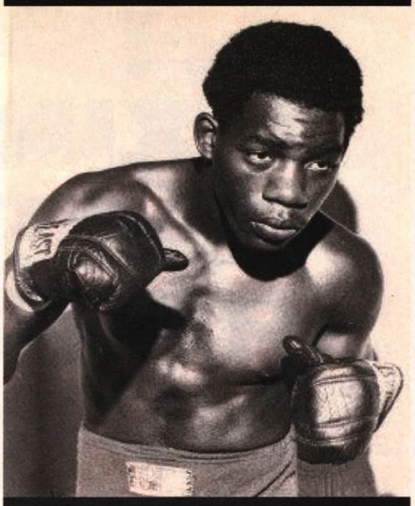
"I fight stronger now, because I fight for Damon, so people won't forget. Like I said, to them I'm Damon's little brother."

Incidentally, this past summer, Starletta became Mrs. Jesse Hart, and in doing so, proved that despite the tragedies and the trials, Jesse Hart is a very lucky man.

So it's back to boxing and if all goes according to plan, London in 2012.

On the outside, Jesse Hart has always been a great boxer. He works hard and that DNA hasn't hurt any. But on the inside, make no mistake: He's earned his stripes – all on his own.

Lighting might not strike twice in the same place, but cyclones … just maybe. ■



MENACING CYCLONE

"He was the best left-hook, one-punch knockout guy I ever saw," promoter J. Russel Peltz, said of Cyclone Hart. And he ought to know. Peltz promoted many of Hart's fights at the legendary Blue Horizon and The Spectrum in Philadelphia.

"It was a whip," he continued. "Frazier would wear you down with his hook, but Hart's was one shot."

Cyclone is a softie when it comes to his son, though.

Ask him if he's proud of young Jesse and the answer comes right away: "He makes me proud every day."

This is high praise from a man who was once ranked third in the 1970s middleweight division. But even more important, it's high praise from a dad.

CAN BOXING-RELATED BRAIN INJURIES BE HEALED?

WORDS: **DAVE McKEE** / IMAGES: **NAOKI FUKUDA**

Some truths are unavoidable, and in boxing some of these truths are alarming. The knockout is one of the most breathtaking moments in sport, yet it is fraught with potential tragedy. More troubling, recent medical research has shown that less-severe blows can accumulate quickly to produce brain damage.

Dr. Margaret Goodman, neurologist and former chairman of the Medical Advisory Board to the Nevada State Athletic Commission, said that the only sure way to arrest -- and have some hope of reversing -- this damage is to avoid punches to the head altogether. For even the slickest boxer, this means retirement.

What if Goodman, one of the most-respected ring physicians in the country, is wrong?

Dr. Charles Simkovich, a chiropractor practicing in Wexford, Pa., claims he can treat and reverse the various symptoms of head trauma. He says he can prevent long term damage through an intervention that is, essentially, a manual adjustment of the bones in the skull. Among his patients are Roy Jones Jr., a number of NFL players and children suffering the effects of ADHD and Autism. Yes, Simkovich claims his treatment works for these ailments as well.

Simkovich practices a treatment called craniosacral therapy. The therapy depends on the controversial assertion that proper movement of the bones in the skull creates a natural, healing flow of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) around the brain. That the bones of the skull do move has been demonstrated by a number of studies, though the relationship of this movement to any specific physiological process remains unproven.

Direct damage to the brain is not the most serious concern in boxing, according to Simkovich. He claims, rather, "it is pressure on the brain from misaligned bones and abnormal respiration from inhibition of the normal movements in the joints of the skull" that cause the problems normally deemed symptomatic of brain trauma.

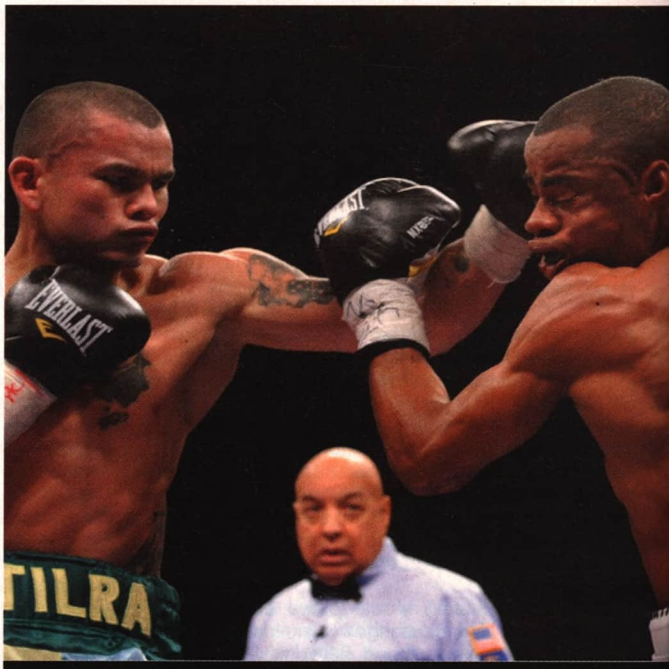
Simkovich explains "respiration" in the following way: "It has been commonly accepted that the bones of the skull ossify, or freeze, during childhood. This is not true. They have a normal rhythmic motion that moves CSF around the brain. If this flow is inhibited, waste in the CSF is not flushed and normal oxygen flow to the brain is prevented. Left untreated, these are the causes of permanent brain damage." The doctor emphatically states, "These treatments can relieve symptoms such as failing visual tracking, slurring of speech and loss of balance due to blows to the head."

Advocates of the procedure see a revolutionary answer to the dangers presented by boxing. Larry Hazzard, former head of the New Jersey Athletic Control Board, finds Simkovich's work promising and wants to see it in general use throughout the sport. However, medical doctors warn that craniosacral therapy is not scientifically proven, and that the symptoms Simkovich presumes to treat are caused by direct damage to the brain. The evidence Simkovich provides for the effectiveness of his treatment is largely in the form of case studies that do not meet the requirements of rigorous medical science.

Any boxer would find hope in the medical miracle Simkovich promises. The ego and courage that send fighters into the ring often keep many fighting too long, even without the promise of such treatments. Simkovich is telling boxers they might enjoy longer careers with less risk under his care.

Goodman says she hopes his treatment is effective but that it requires serious scientific study before being used on active boxers. The British Columbia Office of Health Technology Assessment conducted a review of studies on the treatment and determined "there is insufficient scientific evidence to recommend craniosacral therapy to patients, practitioners or third party payers for any clinical condition."

As Goodman argues, it is one thing to provide a remedy that poses no threat of harm to a boxer. But to use a treatment that has not been scientifically established as viable and send him into the ring full of confidence that he will be fine "is shocking and of great concern". ■



Marcos Maidana demonstrates the impact of a punch on the head of Victor Cayo last year.

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